

Local Data Needs Work Group

Final Report

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**A Joint Project of
The National Association of State Workforce Agencies
and
The Workforce Information Council**

**Workforce Information Council –
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Joint Work Group on Local Data Needs**

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Executive Summary and Recommendations

The Workforce Information Council and the National Association of State Workforce Agencies recognize that state labor market information offices and other players in the nation's labor market information (LMI) system regularly hear demands for "more local data." The Council and the Association are also aware that some information users are conducting their own data collection activities, sometimes at considerable expense and with results of varying quality.

To respond to these needs, we must better understand the specific type of information customers want, what they mean by "local", and how they intend to use the information. We also need to distinguish between information gaps and the need for user education about the information that already is available and for better information delivery.

The Local Data Needs Work Group was chartered jointly by the National Association of State Workforce Agencies and the Workforce Information Council to examine the needs of labor market information users for local data, to identify local data gaps, and to recommend improvements in delivery of local information.

Findings

The Work Group identified the following local information needs that are not addressed in the nation's existing labor market information system or not addressed at the level of currency and detail desired by customers:

- a. *Employer training needs and practices*: Information on training needs for current employees (incumbent workers).
- b. *Hiring difficulty*: Indicators of the difficulty of identifying and hiring new workers with required qualifications. Examples include data on length of time a vacancy is unfilled, and the number of applications per hire.
- c. *Employer recruitment, assessment and hiring practices*: Information on the recruitment methods used, the types of assessment used to screen applicants, and hiring practices such as use of incentives.
- d. *Employer hiring requirements*: Information on employer's specific skill and qualification requirements for hiring new workers, including basic or "soft" skills as well as occupational or technical skills.
- e. *Skill requirements*. Information on skill requirements, including basic or "soft" skills as well as occupational or technical skills. This information indicates skill requirements generally, rather than an individual employer's specific requirements.
- f. *Current job vacancies by occupation (summary information)*: Information about the number of job vacancies by occupation, summarized for the

geographic area. This information is distinguished from lists of specific job openings by individual employer.

- g. *Projected job openings by occupation*: Information on future job openings, including information from employer surveys of job vacancies and expected hiring activity by occupation.
- h. *Occupational employment trends (past trends to current date)*: Time series information on employment by occupation.
- i. *Benefits Information*: Information on employer-provided benefits such as health insurance and retirement programs, by industry or occupation.

The Work Group notes that these findings are based on information generated during a time of rapid economic growth and low unemployment. Somewhat different needs might emerge during times of high unemployment.

Recommendations

Based on the extensive information reviewed during the study, the Work Group offers the following recommendations.

1. Considerations for Addressing Information Gaps

The Work Group recommends that, when filling information gaps is addressed, the following be considered:

- a. *Involve Customers*. Customers should be involved in any new data development. Those responsible for developing new information should gather customer input on how the data would be used, and what is required for geographic detail, timeliness, reliability, and so forth.
- b. *“Real Time” Data*. The concept of “real time” data should be explored in depth with customers. This need was expressed several times during the Work Group’s information gathering, although the input was from a small group of customers and did not identify what information is needed on a “real time” basis, how fast “real time” is, and what quality and cost tradeoffs are acceptable. The Work Group recommends that customers and data providers work together to find the appropriate balance between timeliness of data on the one hand and reliability and precision of data on the other hand. Data users will need to understand and accept limitations that rapid data production will entail. The LMI system will need to understand that there are times when even rough indicators meet legitimate user needs and the methods used to produce these indicators may not meet the system’s customary rigorous standards.

- c. *Fast Turn-Around Surveys.* Provision of state capacity to provide fast turn-around information should be explored, using tools such as telephone surveys and administrative data.
- d. *Methods and Tools.* It often is most efficient to develop valid methods and tools for use by states or local organizations.

2. *Continuous Improvement of the LMI System*

Based on observations, user comments, and the information reviewed during the project, the Work Group recommends that the following activities be developed to promote continuous improvement of the labor market information system. The Work Group notes that some of these approaches are currently being used to some degree. These efforts should be brought together as a more formal, explicit, and cohesive process for continuous improvements.

- a. *Best Practices.* Develop a “best practices” system that establishes criteria for what is “best practice” in LMI, reviews state’s proposals for best practices, and a web site containing information on best practices. The web site should provide a structure and query capability. Best practices should be examined early in the process of developing new information sources or preparing methods and tools.
- b. *Electronic Bibliography.* Develop and maintain a searchable electronic bibliography of special studies and projects. ERIC (Education Resources Information Center) provides a model (see www.askeric.org).
- c. *Replicable Information Development Model.* Adopt a replicable model for development and establishment of new information programs, such as the work group and consortia approaches. The model should address transition from the development stage to implementation and technical support.
- d. *Customer Input and Feedback.* Provide a continuous process for customer input and feedback. This process should include regular communication with important customer organizations, feedback from states to the system, and identification of best practices in customer feedback to be included in the best practices system described above.
- e. *Periodic Assessment Of Data Gaps.* Information needs of customers are likely to change over time as the economic and policy environments change. Periodic assessment of data gaps will assist the LMI system in responding to these changing needs.

The Work Group notes that establishing new nationwide data collection programs to address information gaps may not be feasible and, for some types of data, may not be the best approach. Each information gap must be evaluated to identify whether consistent information across all states and areas is needed, or whether state or local organizations conducting their own non-standardized data collection is appropriate. A forum is needed for making these policy judgments, which may be the Workforce Information Council.

3. *Customer Education and Information Delivery*

The Work Group believes that some apparently unmet needs for information reflect lack of awareness of, or easy access to, available information sources or lack of understanding of how to use available information. The Work Group recommends addressing these needs through the following activities:

- a. *Marketing.* Support efforts to market the labor market information system and its products to users.
- b. *Customer Education.* Improve education of LMI customers on what is already available. An example activity would be to develop an information guide for use by workforce investment boards. Customer education must recognize the varying needs and information uses of different types of customers.
- c. *Information Delivery.* Identify and widely disseminate best practices in information delivery, including innovative analysis practices, delivery systems that reach a full range of customers, interconnectivity of state information sources, and customer-friendly, usability-tested delivery systems.
- d. *Staff Customer Skills.* Improve the skills of LMI and one-stop career center staff in how to listen to customers and interpret their needs, how to communicate with customers in a nontechnical manner, how to give clear and concise presentations, and how to write for the customer audience.
- e. *Staff Technical Skills.* Develop LMI staff skills in technical topics such as survey design and data collection methods, so they are better equipped to respond to customer needs for specialized information collection activities.

Identifying Local Labor Market Information Needs

The Workforce Information Council and the National Association of State Workforce Agencies recognize that state labor market information offices and other players in the nation's labor market information system regularly hear demands for "more local data." The Council and the Association are also aware that some information users are conducting their own data collection activities, sometimes at considerable expense and with results of varying quality.

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Project Approach

The Work Group faced a number of constraints, particularly time and barriers that prevented conducting a customer survey. The Work Group devised a two-pronged project approach to accomplish the assignment within these constraints:

- Conducting a "case review" by examining available state and local needs assessment studies, examples of state and local Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and education plans, community audit proposals, local surveys such as those conducted or sponsored by workforce investment boards, special data collections by LMI offices, and other materials. These materials were reviewed to identify the data items and level of geographic detail addressed. The rationale for this effort is two-fold: (1) needs assessments, plans, and similar materials identify information needs and actual information uses, and (2) investment of funding and effort in local data collection by workforce investment boards and others is a *de facto* indication of an actual or perceived unmet data need.
- Conducting focus groups with LMI users to explore their needs in depth. The focus groups provided customer feedback on information access, analysis and support needs as well as data needs.

The results of both the case review and the focus groups were examined against thirteen “data needs categories” identified by the Work Group:

1. *Labor supply and demand* – data on employment, layoffs and unemployment, projections, and other supply-demand indicators (except education program output and job vacancy data)
2. *Skills supply and demand* – data on the skill requirements of jobs and the skills of workers or potential workers
3. *Educational supply/output* – data on education and training program enrollments and completions
4. *Employer recruitment, assessment and hiring practices* – information on employer practices regarding recruitment, hiring and assessment.
5. *Labor turnover and job vacancies* – data on separations (or its inverse, employee retention), new hires, and job vacancies
6. *Benefits* – data on employer-provided benefits such as retirement plans and health insurance
7. *Wages and compensation* – data on wages and other cash compensation
8. *Commuting patterns* – data relating where workers live and where they work
9. *General demographics* – data on population trends and composition
10. *Terms of employment* – data on full-time/part-time work schedules, Temporary/permanent jobs, and nontraditional employment arrangements
11. *Incumbent worker training needs* – information about training needs of incumbent workers and employer training practices
12. *Income and cost of living* – data on personal income, cost of living, housing costs and similar topics
13. *Information about the firm* - data on characteristics such as unionization, extent of international trade, sales and other firm financial data, and lists of individual employers with industry identification and contact information.

The Work Group also asked nine organizations that represent labor market information users to review the draft summary of the case review results to obtain their feedback. This “customer confirmation” step provides some assurance that the results of the case review do in fact reflect unmet customer needs.

Finally, the Work Group identified data gaps by comparing the local data needs identified in both the case review and the focus groups to the labor market data that are universally available in all states.

Findings: The Case Review

The case review began with an extensive search for reports using labor market information, with a particular interest in finding reports describing surveys to collect local information. This search included an extensive web search, canvassing state labor market information directors, and use of knowledge of the Work Group members and project staff. One hundred documents were identified for review, and the analysis is based on 85 reports that indicated needs for or use of specific local data.

The Work Group recognizes that this collection of reports is not necessarily representative of the need for or use of labor market data across the country. We do believe that these reports provide useful indications of information needs, however.

The reports were grouped into eight “document categories” (Table 1):

- *Needs assessment studies* – 17 reports that examined information needs through focus groups, customer surveys, and other methods.
- *Labor market analysis guides* – 6 reports that provide guidance in analyzing labor markets for purposes such as workforce development program planning.
- *State and local workforce investment board (WIB) plans and materials* – 5 selected state or local plans or similar reports that used labor market data.
- *WIB labor market studies and reports* – 20 reports containing analysis or data prepared by WIBs, including reports on WIB-sponsored data collection activities.
- *Welfare reform and welfare to work documents* – 2 reports that provide examples of use of labor market data in welfare-related programs.
- *Other studies and reports* – 25 reports containing analysis and data prepared by organizations other than WIBs or welfare programs, including reports on sponsored data collection activities.
- *Education plans and materials* – 7 examples of state or local education plans or similar reports that used labor market data.
- *Community audit proposals* – 3 examples of proposals submitted for funding by ETA’s community audit project.

The documents were from a variety of organizations, with the largest number from State and local WIBs, State agencies, and other sources.

Table 1. Summary of Documents Reviewed, by Document Source and Document Category									
Document Source	Document Category								
	Number of Documents Reviewed	Information Needs Assessment Studies	Labor Market Analysis Guides	State And Local WIB Plans and Materials	WIB Labor Market Studies and Reports	Welfare Reform and Welfare to Work Documents	Other Studies and Reports	Education Plans and Materials	Community Audit Proposals
State WIB	10	3	0	2	2	0	3	0	0
Local WIB	24	3	1	3	11	0	2	1	3
State Agency	16	4	1	0	3	0	4	4	0
Business Group	9	0	0	0	2	1	5	1	0
Economic Development Agency	8	2	1	0	2	0	3	0	0
Educational Institution	8	2	0	0	0	0	4	2	0
Other	13	3	3	0	0	1	5	1	0
TOTAL	85	17	6	5	20	2	25	7	3
Note: Columns may not add to totals because some documents involved more than one source (e.g., both a business group and a local workforce investment board).									

Table 2 shows the number of reports by State. Twenty-eight States are represented, and 10 reports are national in scope. A complete list of the reports is presented in Appendix 2.

Table 2. Number of reports reviewed by State of origin			
State	Number of Reports	State	Number of Reports
Alabama	1	New Hampshire	2
Arizona	1	New Jersey	2
California	9	New York	7
Colorado	1	Ohio	3
Hawaii	1	Oklahoma	2
Iowa	3	Oregon	4
Illinois	2	Pennsylvania	9
Indiana	1	Rhode Island	1
Kansas	1	Texas	5
Kentucky	3	Virginia	1
Maryland	1	Washington	3
Maine	1	Wisconsin	1
Michigan	4	Wyoming	1
North Carolina	3	National Reports	10
Nebraska	2	Total	85

Each report was examined to identify a number of characteristics of the report as a whole, and to identify the specific labor market data that were used or identified as needed or important. This information was tabulated and analyzed to provide an overview of the collection of reports, and to identify the frequency with which certain data items were used or mentioned.

Surveys

The Work Group was especially interested in learning what type of information state and local organizations are collecting on their own or sponsoring others to collect. If organizations are expending resources to collect data, presumably they have data needs that are not being met by the labor

market information system, or they are not aware of the data already available. The analysis explores these apparent gaps in labor market information resources.

The case review included forty-seven reports with surveys that were either planned or conducted by the sponsoring organization. In forty-one reports, the surveys had actually been conducted. Table 3 shows the distribution of these surveys by the source of the

Table 3. Number of Documents involving a Survey, by Document Source, and Type of Survey						
Document Source	Number of Documents Involving Surveys			Type of Survey		
	Total	Survey Planned	Survey Conducted	Employer	Household	Student
State WIB	7	2	5	7	0	0
Local WIB	15	4	12	14	2	1
State Agency	7	1	7	7	2	0
Business Group	9	1	9	7	4	0
Economic Development Agency	3	0	3	2	1	0
Educational Institution	5	0	5	5	2	0
Other	5	0	4	3	0	0
TOTAL	47	8	41	41	11	1
Note: Some documents include both planned and conducted surveys, or both employer and household surveys. Some documents were from more than one source (e.g., both a business group and a local workforce investment board).						

report, and by the category of the report. The largest number was from Local workforce investment boards, where 15 reports contained information about surveys that were being planned (4 reports) or had been conducted (12 reports). Seven reports with surveys were from State workforce investment boards, including five reports with conducted surveys. Seven reports were from state agencies, all of which included conducted surveys. Three of these surveys were conducted by the state labor market information office or occupational information coordinating committee.

The bulk of the surveys, forty-one, were employer surveys, while there were eleven household surveys. Some reports included both types of surveys. Over half of the employer surveys were planned or conducted by State and local WIBs and business groups.

Some of the employers surveys are examples of surveys which the Work Group was aware have been conducted for multiple local areas. Examples include the California Cooperative Occupational Information System, Iowa's laborshed surveys, and ERISS. In these cases, an example report was reviewed and such surveys appear only one time in the counts.

Identifying Data Items

The case review identified 76 different types of data, referred to in the analysis as "data items." Identifying data items involved some decisions about grouping together items that are similar in the topic they cover, but may have been defined very differently among the reports. For example, the data item "hiring difficulty" was specified in many different ways across the reports, such as survey questions asking employers to rate the difficulty of hiring for a list of occupations, to proxies for hiring difficulty such as the number of applications received for each position filled.

Also, it was sometimes necessary to define separate data items to capture the type of detail. For example, unemployment claims by industry and unemployment claims by

occupation were treated as two data items. Notes were recorded to help interpret the item's content and detail.

For each data item, the geographic detail used or identified in the report as needed was captured. The analysis examines this information to identify what geographic definitions were important. Additionally, the industry and occupation coding of the data items, if specified, was recorded.

A complete list of the data items, along with the number of observations and the geographic detail, is shown in Appendix 3.

Data Item Results - Overview

The case review recorded 1,678 observations across the 76 different data items. Table 4 shows the number of observations in each of the data needs categories.

By far the largest number of observations, nearly 700, was in the labor supply and demand category. This category was broadly defined to include a range of supply and demand topics, including employment, unemployment, job vacancies, new hires, and other supply-demand indicators.

More than one hundred observations were made for data items in the skills supply and demand, education supply/output, wages and compensation, and general demographic categories.

Table 4. Number of Observations, by Data Needs Category, All Reports			
Data Needs Category	Number of Observations	Data Needs Category	Number of Observations
1. Labor supply and demand	685	9. General demographics	127
2. Skills supply and demand	163	10. Terms of employment	14
3. Education supply/output	108	11. Incumbent worker training	54
4. Employer recruitment, assessment and hiring practices	37	12. Income and cost of living	57
5. Labor turnover and vacancies	94	13. Information about the firm	98
6. Benefits	34	Uncategorized	62
7. Wages and compensation	119	Total, All Categories	1,678
8. Commuting patterns	26		

While the data needs categories are helpful, they differ significantly in how broadly or narrowly they are defined. More useful understanding can be achieved by looking at the individual data items.

Table 5 lists the most frequently observed data items, in rank order by the number of observations. The full list is shown in Appendix 3.

Table 5. Data items with twenty or more observations, ranked by number of observations, all reports			
Data item number	Data item	Number of observations	Rank
36	Wages by Occupation	71	1
9	Unemployment level and/or unemployment rate	60	2
18	Industry employment level	60	2
19	Industry employment trends (past trends to current date)	57	4
1	Population level and trends	56	5
3	Population composition by demographic characteristics	55	6
66	Employer training needs and practices	54	7
73	Hiring difficulty	51	8
22	Average wages by industry	47	9
31	Employment level by Occupation	45	10
4	Labor Force size and trends	44	11
7	Total Employment level and trends	44	11
35	Projected job openings by occupation	44	11
58	Other - indicators of occupational supply/education data	44	11
34	Occupational employment forecasts (long-term)	41	15
47	Skill requirements	41	15
12	Personal Income	38	17
59	List of individual employers, with industry designation and contact information	37	18
60	Employer recruitment, assessment and hiring practices	37	18
17	Other general LMI indicators	35	20
72	Firm characteristics	34	21
21	Industry employment forecasts (long-term)	30	22
38	Current job vacancies by occupation (summary information)	27	23
82	Commuting data	26	24
32	Occupational employment trends (past trends to current date)	24	25
53	Number of completions by program (past or expected)	22	26
61	Employer hiring requirements: Technical or occupational skills	22	26
29	Industry Clusters	21	28
63	Employer hiring requirements: Other	21	28
68	Other employer information	21	28
25	Labor turnover by industry	20	31

Thirty-one data items appeared more than twenty times in the reports reviewed. The largest number of observations was 71 for wages by occupation, followed by 60 each for industry employment level and unemployment level and/or unemployment rate, 57 for industry employment trends, and 56 for population level and trends.

Limiting the reports to those where a survey was conducted provides a different view. Table 6 shows the most frequently observed data items in reports where a survey was conducted.

Twenty-three data items appeared at least ten times on reports with conducted surveys. The most frequently observed items were employer training needs and practices (51

Table 6. Data items with ten or more observations on conducted surveys, ranked by number of observations.					
Data item number	Data Item	Number of observations on conducted surveys	Rank	Number of observations from all reports	Rank on all reports
66	Employer training needs and practices	51	1	54	7
73	Hiring difficulty	48	2	51	8
60	Employer recruitment, assessment and hiring practices	34	3	37	18
72	Firm characteristics	24	4	34	21
36	Wages by Occupation	23	5	71	1
61	Employer hiring requirements: Technical or occupational skills	19	6	22	26
38	Current job vacancies by occupation (summary information)	17	7	27	23
63	Employer hiring requirements: Other	17	7	21	28
68	Other employer information	17	7	21	28
35	Projected job openings by occupation	16	10	44	11
64	Employer opinion on skills of current workers	15	11	17	34
18	Industry employment level	15	11	60	2
47	Skill requirements	15	11	41	15
31	Employment level by Occupation	14	14	45	10
62	Employer hiring requirements: Basic or "soft" skills	13	15	18	32
67	Benefits provided by individual employers	12	16	13	46
65	Employer opinion on skills of workers in the general workforce	12	16	12	48
17	Other general LMI indicators	12	16	35	20
77	Terms of employment	12	16	14	44
46	Education Level	11	20	15	40
44	Benefits by occupation	10	22	18	32
80	Employee retention and turnover	10	22	11	54
75	New hires	10	22	13	45

observations), hiring difficulty (48), employer recruitment, assessment and hiring practices (34), firm characteristics (24), and wages by occupation (23). Four of these five top-ranked items deal with internal processes or characteristics of businesses.

Of the ten top-ranked items on conducted surveys, three were also among the ten top-ranked items found on all reports: employer training needs and practices (rank 1 versus 7 for all reports), hiring difficulty (2 versus 8), and wages by occupation (5 versus 1).

Two high-ranked items for all reports fell further down the list for reports with conducted surveys: industry employment level (rank 2 on all reports versus 11 for reports with conducted surveys), and employment level by occupation (10 versus 14). The remaining top-ten items on all reports had fewer than ten observations on conducted surveys and thus do not appear in Table 6: industry employment trends (rank 4 on all reports), population level and trends (rank 5), population composition by demographic characteristics (rank 6), and average wages by industry (rank 9). This result suggests that data are generally available for these data items.

Among the top ten items for reports with conducted surveys, seven were not also among the top ten for all reports: employer recruitment, assessment and hiring practices (rank 3 versus 18), firm characteristics (4 versus 21), employer hiring requirements: technical or occupational skills (6 versus 26), current job vacancies by occupation (7 versus 23), employer hiring requirements: other (7 versus 28), other employer information (7 versus 28), and projected job openings by occupation (10 versus 11).

For fifteen of the data items listed in Table 6, at least two-thirds of the observations were found on conducted surveys. That is, when these data items appeared, they were very likely to have been collected on special surveys rather than have come from existing information sources. Table 7 lists the data items along with the percentage of their observations that came from reports with conducted surveys.

This result suggests that information for these data items either is not available for the area covered by the surveys, or perhaps not available at all, or the available information did not meet the user's needs or was unknown to them. These items will be examined in more detail in the following section.

Table 7. Data items with ten or more observations on conducted surveys, and percent of all observations appearing on reports with conducted surveys.				
Data item number	Data Item	Number of observations on all reports	Number of observations on conducted surveys	Percent of all observations appearing on reports with surveys
66	Employer training needs and practices	54	51	94.4%
73	Hiring difficulty	51	48	94.1%
60	Employer recruitment, assessment and hiring practices	37	34	91.9%
72	Firm characteristics	34	24	70.6%
36	Wages by occupation	71	23	32.4%
61	Employer hiring requirements: Technical or occupational skills	22	19	86.4%
38	Current job vacancies by occupation (summary information)	27	17	63.0%
63	Employer hiring requirements: Other	21	17	81.0%
68	Other employer information	21	17	81.0%
35	Projected job openings by occupation	44	16	36.4%
64	Employer opinion of skills of current workers	17	15	88.2%
18	Industry employment level	60	15	25.0%
47	Skill requirements	41	15	36.6%
31	Employment level by occupation	45	14	31.1%
62	Employer hiring requirements: Basic or "soft" skills	18	13	72.2%
67	Benefits provided, by individual employers	13	12	92.3%
65	Employer opinion on skills of workers in the general workforce	12	12	100.0%
17	Other general LMI indicators	35	12	34.4%
77	Terms of employment	14	12	85.7%
46	Education Level	15	11	73.3%
44	Benefits by occupation	18	10	55.6%
80	Employee retention and turnover	11	10	90.9%
75	New hires	13	10	76.9%

Table 8. Number of observations by geographic area definition	
Geographic area	Number of observations
National	47
State	224
Multi-State	10
Metropolitan Area (MSA)	102
Multi-county	271
County	499
City	37
Workforce Investment Area	334
Subcounty or subcity	23
Other local area	66
Unspecified	65

A final piece of summary information from the case review is the distribution of the observations by geographic area. Table 8 shows the number of observations by type of geographic area represented in the data item. The most frequently found geographic area definition was county, with 499 observations, followed by workforce investment area (334), multi-county area (271), state (224), and metropolitan statistical area (102).

It should be noted that the case review did not examine unique local geographic area definitions such as towns in New England. The study also included very few studies from states where counties with very large land areas are the norm,

such as Alaska or Arizona.

Data Items In Detail

This section discusses each of the most frequently observed data items within each of the data needs categories. The analysis examined the document categories where the item appeared, geographic detail¹, how many of the observations came from reports that included conducted surveys, and additional understanding provided by the notes made during the review.

The description notes whether the data item is provided by the current LMI system. A data item was considered as provided if it is available in all states. Where the Work Group had information about special activities in some states, this is noted as well.

The discussion also notes whether the Work Group considered this data item a significant unmet need that the LMI system could address.

The analysis includes data items with twenty or more observations across all reports, or with ten or more observations on conducted surveys. Data items are listed in descending order by the number of observations across all reports.

Where the number of observations across all reports is significantly higher than the number of observations on conducted surveys, this discrepancy suggests that existing data sources were used and there was little need for special data collection. Conversely, if the number of times the item was collected on a survey is closer to the number of observations across all reports, this may suggest a data gap. The Work Group is also mindful that local organizations sometimes conduct employer surveys as a means of

¹ Because the focus of the analysis is local data needs, information on the number of observations at the national, state, and multi-state level are not shown in the text. Thus, the information on observations by geographic area will not add to the total number of observations. Information on the number of observations for all geographic areas is shown in Appendix 3.

involving employers in workforce development activities, and obtaining data from these surveys may sometimes be a secondary purpose.

1. Labor Supply and Demand

This data needs category includes information on several topics: overall employment and unemployment, industry and occupational employment levels, trends and projections, as well as more specialized information on hiring, layoffs, and underemployment.

Industry employment level

Number of observations: 60

Number of observations where this data item was collected in a survey: 15. Employer survey (14), Household survey (1)

Document Categories where this data item appeared: Information needs assessment studies (10), Labor market analysis guides (7), State and local WIB plans and materials (1), WIB labor market studies and reports (18), Welfare reform and welfare to work documents (0), Education plans and materials (3), Community audit proposals (5), and Other studies and reports (16)

Local geographic area definitions used: MSA (6), Multi-county (12), County (17), City (1), WIA Area (13), Subcounty or subcity (1), Other local area (1), Unspecified (0).

Is this data item provided by the LMI system? Yes. Two programs provide industry employment trend information. The Current Employment Statistics program provides monthly and annual data for states and some MSAs, at varying levels of industry detail. While available quickly (a few weeks following the survey reference date), the CES data are limited in the industry detail available, and are not provided for all MSAs. The amount of industry detail will decrease with the implementation of the probability sampling method.

The Covered Employment and Wages (ES-202) program provides detailed monthly and annual industry employment data for states and counties, which can be aggregated to MSAs and for the WIA areas that are single or multiple counties. While very detailed, the ES-202 data are not available quickly.

Discussion: The results indicate that existing data sources are widely used. Where industry employment was collected on surveys, usually additional information was gathered about topics such as the number of part-time and full-time jobs, the number of temporary jobs and contract workers, and the number of women and minority workers. There were six occurrences of requests each for the number of part-time and temporary jobs. The only sources of work schedule information in the existing LMI system are the Census and limited state-level information from the Current Population Survey, and the

Current Employment Statistics survey, which provides average weekly hours for production and nonsupervisory workers in nonfarm private employers. The CES also provides some information on the number of female employees.

While industry employment data are generally available, additional geographic detail may be important to some users. Additional detail can be provided through geographic coding of the ES-202 database.

Unemployment level and/or unemployment rate

Number of Observations: 60

Number of observations where this data item was collected in a survey: 3. Employer survey (0), Household survey (3)

Document Categories where this data item appeared: Information needs assessment studies (11), Labor market analysis guides (11), State and local WIB plans and materials (5), WIB labor market studies and reports (4), Welfare reform and welfare to work documents (0), Education plans and materials (3), Community audit proposals (7), and Other studies and reports (19)

Local geographic area definitions used: MSA (7), Multi-county (10), County (20), City (2), WIA Area (8), Subcounty or subcity (2), Other local area (2), Unspecified area (0).

Is this data item provided by the LMI system? Yes. The Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) program provides this data for states, MSAs, counties, and cities of 25,000 or more population. While not published by WIA area by BLS, the data can be assembled by WIA area, which are normally one or more counties and/or cities. State LMI offices generally perform this task.

Discussion: The case review suggests that data from the standard source, the LAUS program, are generally used. This item was collected on three household surveys, where it was presented along with other demographic and employment characteristics of the respondents.

Industry employment trends (past trends to current date)

Number of observations: 57

Number of observations where this data item was collected in a survey: 3. Employer survey (3), Household survey (0)

Document Categories where this data item appeared: Information needs assessment studies (11), Labor market analysis guides (10), State and local WIB plans and materials (6), WIB labor market studies and reports (10), Welfare reform and welfare to work

documents (0), Education plans and materials (1), Community audit proposals (5), and Other studies and reports (14)

Local geographic area definitions used: MSA (7), Multi-county (9), County (13), City (1), WIA Area (12), Subcounty or subcity (1), Other local area (1), Unspecified (2).

Is this data item provided by the LMI system? Yes. See “industry employment level” above.

Discussion: See “industry employment level” above. The case review suggests that data from the standard sources are generally used.

Hiring difficulty

Number of observations: 51

Number of observations where this data item was collected in a survey: 48. Employer survey (48), Household survey (0)

Document Categories where this data item appeared: Information needs assessment studies (0), Labor market analysis guides (1), State and local WIB plans and materials (0), WIB labor market studies and reports (20), Welfare reform and welfare to work documents (0), Education plans and materials (3), Community audit proposals (0), and Other studies and reports (27)

Local geographic area definitions used: MSA (1), Multi-county (3), County (17), City (0), WIA Area (16), Subcounty or subcity (0), Other local area (0), Unspecified (0).

Is this data item provided by the LMI system? No. Some states are conducting job vacancy surveys, which provide an indicator of hiring difficulty. The Job Vacancy Statistics Work Group, involving states, the Bureau of Labor Statistics, and the Employment and Training Administration, has developed data collection methods and tools that will become available soon to states.

Discussion: The Work Group has identified hiring difficulty as an unmet local data need.

Hiring difficulty was the second most frequently collected data item among the surveys reviewed, appearing exclusively on employer surveys. This data item showed up most frequently in WIB labor market studies and reports, and other studies and reports.

Hiring difficulty was represented by a variety of formulations of employer survey questions, such as:

- Is the firm having difficulty hiring due to skill shortages?
- Difficulty hiring, by education level and specific job skills.

- Questions asking the employer to rate a list of occupations that are most difficult to fill, often using a rating scale.
- Questions asking the employer to list the top jobs that are most difficult to fill (usually a list of job titles or occupation titles).
- Questions asking about the number of applications received per hire, number of candidates interviewed per hire, and the number of candidates that were qualified per hire.
- Job vacancy surveys, including length of time required to fill the vacancy.

Hiring difficulty questions were often accompanied by request for detail about topics such as specific types of skills, level of experience, wages, and level of education.

Employment level by occupation

Number of observations: 45

Number of observations where this data item was collected in a survey: 14. Employer survey (11), Household survey (3)

Document Categories where this data item appeared: Information needs assessment studies (11), Labor market analysis guides (4), State and local WIB plans and materials (2), WIB labor market studies and reports (14), Welfare reform and welfare to work documents (0), Education plans and materials (1), Community audit proposals (4), and Other studies and reports (9)

Local geographic area definitions used: MSA (3), Multi-county (10), County (13), City (1), WIA Area (10), Subcounty or subcity (0), Other local area (1), Unspecified (1).

Is this data item provided by the LMI system? Yes. The Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) program provides data on employment by occupation. Estimates are provided for states and metropolitan areas. States may use the Estimates Delivery System (EDS) to produce OES data at the county and city level. The OES data become available about one year after the survey reference date. The occupational detail provided is at the Standard Occupational Classification level.

Discussion: Employment by occupation appeared eleven times in employer surveys and three times in household surveys. These appearances generally asked for information on a limited number of occupations, such as those the employer considered in greatest demand, or employment in occupations targeted by the study (e.g., nurses).

Labor force size and trends

Number of observations: 44

Number of observations where this data item was collected in a survey: 1. Employer survey (0), Household survey (1)

Document Categories where this data item appeared: Information needs assessment studies (8), Labor market analysis guides (7), State and local WIB plans and materials (3), WIB labor market studies and reports (1), Welfare reform and welfare to work documents (0), Education plans and materials (3), Community audit proposals (8), and Other studies and reports (14)

Local geographic area definitions used: MSA (7), Multi-county (7), County (13), City (0), WIA Area (6), Subcounty or subcity (1), Other local area (1), Unspecified (0).

Is this data item provided by the LMI system? Yes. The Local Area Unemployment Statistics program provides this information. See “unemployment level and/or unemployment rate”, above.

Discussion: See “unemployment level and/or unemployment rate”, above. The case review suggested that standard sources are generally being used.

Projected job openings by occupation

Number of observations: 44

Number of observations where this data item was collected in a survey: 16. Employer survey (16), Household survey (0)

Document Categories where this data item appeared: Information needs assessment studies (3), Labor market analysis guides (5), State and local WIB plans and materials (4), WIB labor market studies and reports (15), Welfare reform and welfare to work documents (0), Education plans and materials (4), Community audit proposals (4), and Other studies and reports (9)

Local geographic area definitions used: MSA (2), Multi-county (7), County (14), City (0), WIA Area (10), Subcounty or subcity (0), Other local area (2), Unspecified (2).

Is this data item provided by the LMI system? Partially. All states are required to prepare long-term occupational projections, including job openings information, under the ETA funding for LMI core products. States are required to provide projections for the state and substate areas. The specific substate geography varies from state to state. States are also required to produce short-term occupational forecasts (four to eight quarters). States generally do not conduct employer surveys on projected hiring or vacancies.

Discussion: The Work Group has identified this data item as an unmet need.

In the employer surveys reviewed, employers were asked to indicate the number of job openings or the number of new workers they expected to hire in some future period

(generally over the next year). Often the list of occupations was limited, for example, to those where the employer expected to do the most hiring, or those requiring the most skills. The timeframe usually was short, for example, openings expected over the next year or two. In some surveys, information about the occupation also was collected, such as wages, part-time/full-time status, and the required level of education.

Employer forecasts of job openings or expected new hires by occupation is a different type of information than that provided by the projections from state LMI offices. First, employer forecasts are short-term, while the projections generally are long-term (10 year period). States are also required to produce short-term occupational forecasts, as noted above, although many states do not publish these forecasts because revenue departments in their states are responsible for all short-term forecasts.

Secondly, employer forecasts may or may not be based on an explicit analysis of expected economic conditions, while the projections are based on explicit economic assumptions, trend analysis and use of modeling tools. It should also be noted that employers who are expecting to downsize or close (or to expand) may be reluctant to accurately answer questions about expected job openings for fear of revealing their business plans.

While employer job openings forecasts have been criticized over the years as an inaccurate approach, the case review shows that employer surveys asking such questions remain popular among local organizations. This appears to be a need for “real time” local information, and a mechanism for being “in touch” with employers. Business users are looking for a fast early warning system to alert them to changes that might affect recruitment or retention of employees.

The Work Group recommends that this need be explored in depth with Workforce Investment Boards and others who are conducting such local surveys to better understand how this information is being used and in what ways the LMI system can address the need.

Total employment level and trends

Number of observations: 44

Number of observations where this data item was collected in a survey: 4. Employer survey (0), Household survey (4)

Document Categories where this data item appeared: Information needs assessment studies (9), Labor market analysis guides (7), State and local WIB plans and materials (1), WIB labor market studies and reports (5), Welfare reform and welfare to work documents (0), Education plans and materials (3), Community audit proposals (7), and Other studies and reports (12)

Local geographic area definitions used: MSA (4), Multi-county (10), County (12), City (2), WIA Area (6), Subcounty or subcity (0), Other local area (3), Unspecified (0).

Is this data item provided by the LMI system? Yes. The Local Area Unemployment Statistics program provides this information, while total nonagricultural wage and salary employment and total covered employment are provided by the Current Employment Statistics and Covered Employment and Wages programs. See industry employment level and unemployment level and/or unemployment rate, above.

Discussion: The case review suggests that data from the standard sources are generally used. Total employment was collected in three household surveys reviewed.

Occupational employment forecasts (long-term)

Number of observations: 41

Number of observations where this data item was collected in a survey: 3. Employer survey (3), Household survey (0)

Document Categories where this data item appeared: Information needs assessment studies (15), Labor market analysis guides (7), State and local WIB plans and materials (5), WIB labor market studies and reports (3), Welfare reform and welfare to work documents (0), Education plans and materials (3), Community audit proposals (0), and Other studies and reports (8)

Local geographic area definitions used: MSA (2), Multi-county (5), County (8), City (0), WIA Area (10), Subcounty or subcity (0), Other local area (2), Unspecified (2).

Is this data item provided by the LMI system? Yes. See “projected job openings by occupation”, above. The results suggest that the existing occupational projections are being used.

Discussion: See “projected job openings by occupation”, above. The results suggest that the existing long-term occupational projections are being widely used.

Industry employment forecasts (long-term)

Number of observations: 30

Number of observations where this data item was collected in a survey: 0.

Document Categories where this data item appeared: Information needs assessment studies (9), Labor market analysis guides (11), State and local WIB plans and materials (4), WIB labor market studies and reports (3), Welfare reform and welfare to work

documents (0), Education plans and materials (0), Community audit proposals (0), and Other studies and reports (3)

Local geographic area definitions used: MSA (2), Multi-county (0), County (7), City (1), WIA Area (8), Subcounty or subcity (0), Other local area (1), Unspecified (2).

Is this data item provided by the LMI system? Yes. See “projected job openings by occupation”, above.

Discussion: See “projected job openings by occupation”, above. The case review suggests that standard sources are being used.

Occupational employment trends (past trends to current date)

Number of observations: 24

Number of observations where this data item was collected in a survey: 2. Employer survey (2), Household survey (0)

Document Categories where this data item appeared: Information needs assessment studies (5), Labor market analysis guides (7), State and local WIB plans and materials (2), WIB labor market studies and reports (4), Welfare reform and welfare to work documents (0), Education plans and materials (2), Community audit proposals (0), and Other studies and reports (4)

Local geographic area definitions used: MSA (2), Multi-county (3), County (6), City (0), WIA Area (5), Subcounty or subcity (0), Other local area (1), Unspecified (0).

Is this data item provided by the LMI system? No. While the OES data are used as inputs in developing projections of employment and job openings by occupation, the data are not provided as time series for examination of past trends. Also, the occupational coding structure has recently changed to the Standard Occupational Classification, which breaks the series. See “employment level by occupation”, above.

Discussion: The Work Group has identified this data item as an unmet need.

Half of the observations were found in information needs assessment studies and labor market analysis guides, suggesting a recognized need for which data are not available. Past occupational employment trends (along with wage trends) can be used as a demand indicator.

With the transition of the OES program to the Standard Occupational Classification, it should be possible to begin building time-series data starting with 2001.

Industry clusters

Number of observations: 21

Number of observations where this data item was collected in a survey: 0

Document Categories where this data item appeared: Information needs assessment studies (3), Labor market analysis guides (4), State and local WIB plans and materials (4), WIB labor market studies and reports (3), Welfare reform and welfare to work documents (0), Education plans and materials (0), Community audit proposals (5), and Other studies and reports (2)

Local geographic area definitions used: MSA (1), Multi-county (2), County (6), City (1), WIA Area (8), Subcounty or subcity (0), Other local area (0), Unspecified (1).

Is this data item provided by the LMI system? No. Available industry employment data can be organized by cluster, as long as cluster definitions are clear and sufficient detail is available in the industry data. However, there are no standard definitions to describe these clusters.

Discussion: Industry clusters are used in local economic analysis, and in discussing training needs in terms more familiar to customers than the standard industrial classification categories. For example, one study reviewed used five industry clusters for assessment of local workforce needs: manufacturing, information technology, tourism/hospitality, health care and biotech, and business finance.²

While the Work Group did not consider industry clusters an unmet data need, the development of standardized definitions for both occupational and industry clusters would be useful.

New hires

Number of observations: 12

Number of observations where this data item was collected in a survey: 10. Employer survey (10), Household survey (0)

Document Categories where this data item appeared: Information needs assessment studies (1), Labor market analysis guides (0), State and local WIB plans and materials (0), WIB labor market studies and reports (8), Welfare reform and welfare to work documents (0), Education plans and materials (0), Community audit proposals (1), and Other studies and reports (2)

² Southwestern Pennsylvania Community Audit Project.

Local geographic area definitions used: MSA (0), Multi-county (1), County (6), City (0), WIA Area (3), Subcounty or subcity (0), Other local area (0), Unspecified (2).

Is this data item provided by the LMI system? No. Some state LMI offices have access to the state data collected for the National Directory of New Hires required by the federal welfare reform law.

Discussion: The results suggest that the available new hires data are not being used. However, the number of observations for this data item is relatively low, indicating the need for this data may not be widespread.

2. Skills Supply and Demand

Skill requirements

Number of observations: 41

Number of observations where this data item was collected in a survey: 15. Employer survey (13), Household survey (2)

Document Categories where this data item appeared: Information needs assessment studies (12), Labor market analysis guides (5), State and local WIB plans and materials (2), WIB labor market studies and reports (8), Welfare reform and welfare to work documents (0), Education plans and materials (3), Community audit proposals (5), and Other studies and reports (6)

Local geographic area definitions used: MSA (2), Multi-county (8), County (7), City (1), WIA Area (7), Subcounty or subcity (0), Other local area (1), Unspecified (4).

Is this data item provided by the LMI system? O*NET provides information on basic and cross-functional skills by occupation, as well as task information. Occupation-specific skills information is being developed.

Discussion: The Work Group has identified skill requirements as an unmet data need.

The case review revealed a number of dimensions to the need for information on skill requirements:

- Some studies identified needs for information on job duties and transferable skills, and skills important for advancement.
- Some surveys collected skills information from employers using questions such as identifying “the most critical skills”, asking for importance ratings of a list of skills, identifying the portion of employees required to have specific skills such as computer skills.

- Some of the employer surveys asked employers to identify how the skill content of jobs is expected to change in the future.
- Some studies pointed out the need to identify skill shortages or analyze skill supply and demand.

This variety of approaches indicates the complexity of this type of information need. Sometimes the need is for analysis of occupational supply and demand information, which is not consistently provided across all states. In this context “skill” may be a synonym for “occupation.”

This data item is closely related to the three items on employer hiring requirements, discussed later in this section.

The need also can be described as information that goes beyond overall occupational trends and forecasts and reveals the specific type of skills that should be imparted in the education and training programs to be offered.

Skill requirements information that identifies basic and “soft” skills would be useful in assessing the basic skills of youth and adults and identifying education and training they need to bring them up to minimum basic skill levels, as well as the interpersonal, communication, problem-solving, and other “soft” skills that need to be addressed in schools and training programs and in counseling.

Skill requirements information that captures occupation-specific skill requirements would be useful in decision-making on specific training program offerings, as well as in individual decision-making about what training to acquire.

O*NET currently provides some of the skill information needed, and in the future will also have occupation-specific skill information. O*NET is designed to provide a broad profile, however, and does not capture the variations in skill requirements of an occupation that will occur across specific industries and employers.

There is an unmet need for local skill requirements information for use in program strategy and decision-making, using well-designed data gathering tools, hopefully within the context of O*NET’s standardized (and therefore comparable and assessable) definitions. There may also be a need to increase awareness of O*NET among WIBs and local business organizations.

Employer hiring requirements: technical or occupational skills

Number of observations: 22

Number of observations where this data item was collected in a survey: 19. Employer survey (19), Household survey (0)

Document Categories where this data item appeared: Information needs assessment studies (1), Labor market analysis guides (1), State and local WIB plans and materials (0), WIB labor market studies and reports (15), Welfare reform and welfare to work documents (0), Education plans and materials (2), Community audit proposals (0), and Other studies and reports (3)

Local geographic area definitions used: MSA (0), Multi-county (3), County (11), City (0), WIA Area (7), Subcounty or subcity (0), Other local area (0), Unspecified (1).

Is this data item provided by the LMI system? No. Some information on employer hiring requirements potentially could be extracted from job postings on America's Job Bank and similar systems, although attempts to do so have not yet yielded results.

Also, O*NET skills information, along with projected job openings information, could be used to provide information on skill requirements for openings employers need to fill. At least one report reviewed presented O*NET skills information for occupations with the greatest projected demand.³

Discussion: The Work Group has identified this data item, along with "employer hiring requirements: basic skills", as an unmet data need.

The case review identified two employer hiring requirements data items related to skills: requirements for basic or "soft" skills and requirements for technical or occupational skills. When taken together, these items appeared forty times, including thirty-two observations on conducted surveys. In addition, the general data item "skill requirements" appeared forty-one times. See "skill requirements" above for additional discussion.

Employer hiring requirements: Other

Number of observations: 21

Number of observations where this data item was collected in a survey: 17. Employer survey (17), Household survey (0)

Document Categories where this data item appeared: Information needs assessment studies (1), Labor market analysis guides (3), State and local WIB plans and materials (0), WIB labor market studies and reports (11), Welfare reform and welfare to work documents (0), Education plans and materials (2), Community audit proposals (1), and Other studies and reports (3)

Local geographic area definitions used: MSA (0), Multi-county (3), County (12), City (0), WIA Area (4), Subcounty or subcity (0), Other local area (1), Unspecified (0).

³ *Outlook 2000: Detailed Occupational Projections and Labor Supply*, Wyoming Department of Employment, October 2000.

Is this data item provided by the LMI system? No

Discussion: See discussion under “employer hiring requirements: technical or occupational skills,” above. Other hiring requirements includes a variety of items such as education level, physical requirements, certification, and experience. One survey asked employers to rate twenty-six “workplace know-how skills.”

Employer hiring requirements: basic or “soft” skills

Number of observations: 18

Number of observations where this data item was collected in a survey: 13. Employer survey (13), Household survey (0)

Document Categories where this data item appeared: Information needs assessment studies (1), Labor market analysis guides (2), State and local WIB plans and materials (0), WIB labor market studies and reports (12), Welfare reform and welfare to work documents (0), Education plans and materials (1), Community audit proposals (0), and Other studies and reports (2)

Local geographic area definitions used: MSA (0), Multi-county (4), County (8), City (0), WIA Area (6), Subcounty or subcity (0), Other local area (0), Unspecified (0).

Is this data item provided by the LMI system? No.

Discussion: See discussion under “employer hiring requirements: technical or occupational skills,” above.

Employer opinion of skills of current workers

Number of observations: 17

Number of observations where this data item was collected in a survey: 15. Employer surveys (15), Household surveys (0)

Document Categories where this data item appeared: Information needs assessment studies (1), Labor market analysis guides (0), State and local WIB plans and materials (0), WIB labor market studies and reports (8), Welfare reform and welfare to work documents (0), Education plans and materials (1), Community audit proposals (0), and Other studies and reports (7)

Local geographic area definitions used: MSA (0), Multi-county (2), County (6), City (1), WIA Area (5), Subcounty or subcity (0), Other local area (0), Unspecified (0).

Is this data item provided by the LMI system? No.

Discussion: This item appeared 15 times on employer surveys reviewed in the form of questions such as the portion of company workers who are proficient at their current jobs, whether the employer felt employees possess certain skills to the company's satisfaction, what the most common skill deficiencies were, and their opinion about the skill of recent job applicants.

Employer opinion on skills of workers in the general workforce

Number of observations: 12

Number of observations where this data item was collected in a survey: 12. Employer survey (12), Household survey (0)

Document Categories where this data item appeared: Information needs assessment studies (0), Labor market analysis guides (1), State and local WIB plans and materials (0), WIB labor market studies and reports (5), Welfare reform and welfare to work documents (1), Education plans and materials (2), Community audit proposals (0), and Other studies and reports (3)

Local geographic area definitions used: MSA (1), Multi-county (3), County (4), City (0), WIA Area (2), Subcounty or subcity (0), Other local area (0), Unspecified (0).

Is this data item provided by the LMI system? No.

Discussion: This item is similar to "employer opinion on skills of current workers", above, except that it applies to the general workforce rather than the company's workforce.

3. Education Supply/Output

Other indicators of occupational supply/education data

Number of observations: 44

Number of observations where this data item was collected in a survey: 9. Employer survey (4), Household survey (5)

Document Categories where this data item appeared: Information needs assessment studies (12), Labor market analysis guides (5), State and local WIB plans and materials (0), WIB labor market studies and reports (1), Welfare reform and welfare to work

documents (1), Education plans and materials (9), Community audit proposals (1), and Other studies and reports (15)

Local geographic area definitions used: MSA (2), Multi-county (7), County (10), City (0), WIA Area (2), Subcounty or subcity (2), Other local area (5), Unspecified (5).

Is this data item provided by the LMI system? Yes. Information on school enrollments and completions is widely available, although similar information by type of program is more problematic. Student follow-up information, while often available, is not standardized.

Discussion: This data item covers a variety of information, including education program enrollment and completions, student follow-up information, literacy and English-speaking skills of workers, college test score information, opinions about the education and training system, and participation in training.

Number of completions by program (past or expected)

Number of observations: 22

Number of observations where this data item was collected in a survey: 1. Employer survey (0), Household survey (0), Training provider survey (1)

Document Categories where this data item appeared: Information needs assessment studies (8), Labor market analysis guides (2), State and local WIB plans and materials (0), WIB labor market studies and reports (1), Welfare reform and welfare to work documents (0), Education plans and materials (2), Community audit proposals (0), and Other studies and reports (9)

Local geographic area definitions used: MSA (1), Multi-county (5), County (4), City (0), WIA Area (2), Subcounty or subcity (2), Other local area (0), Unspecified (3).

Is this data item provided by the LMI system? Yes. The ALMIS Database includes information on program completers, and states by the One-Stop LMI core products grant are required to populate the database.

Discussion: Ten of the twenty-two observations were from needs assessment studies and labor market analysis guides, suggesting a recognized need. All of the reports that presented program completer data used existing sources, suggesting that the need is being met.

The relatively low number of observations may indicate a need to examine the accessibility of program completer data, however. It would be expected that WIB plans labor market studies would make use of program completer data as an indicator of whether training needs of the area are being met. Contrary to this expectation, no plans and only one WIB study used this data.

Education level

Number of observations: 15

Number of observations where this data item was collected in a survey: 11. Employer survey (8), Household survey (3)

Document Categories where this data item appeared: Information needs assessment studies (2), Labor market analysis guides (2), State and local WIB plans and materials (0), WIB labor market studies and reports (6), Welfare reform and welfare to work documents (0), Education plans and materials (2), Community audit proposals (0), and Other studies and reports (3)

Local geographic area definitions used: MSA (0), Multi-county (2), County (4), City (0), WIA Area (4), Subcounty or subcity (0), Other local area (0), Unspecified (2).

Is this data item provided by the LMI system? Partially. The Census provides education level as one of many demographic characteristics. Also, some education level indicators are available in O*NET and the BLS Occupational Outlook program. Information on education level requirements for job openings potentially could be extracted from job postings on America's Job Bank and similar systems, although attempts to do so have not yet yielded results.

Discussion: Where this item appeared on surveys, it was generally to ask employers about the education level required for a list of occupations, or for the occupations or job vacancies for which they usually hire or are currently seeking workers.

4. Employer recruitment, assessment and hiring practices

Employer recruitment, assessment and hiring practices

Number of observations: 37

Number of observations where this data item was collected in a survey: 34. Employer survey (34), Household survey (0)

Document Categories where this data item appeared: Information needs assessment studies (0), Labor market analysis guides (2), State and local WIB plans and materials (0), WIB labor market studies and reports (17), Welfare reform and welfare to work documents (0), Education plans and materials (3), Community audit proposals (0), and Other studies and reports (10)

Local geographic area definitions used: MSA (0), Multi-county (4), County (19), City (1), WIA Area (7), Subcounty or subcity (0), Other local area (2), Unspecified (0).

Is this data item provided by the LMI system? No.

Discussion: The Work Group has identified this item as an unmet local data need.

This item was the third most frequently collected data item on the surveys reviewed. Most of the occurrences were in labor market studies conducted by WIBs and other local groups such as business groups.

This data item captures a number of different dimensions, exemplified by the following:

- Questions about employers use of various recruitment methods, such as word of mouth, employment services, newspapers and temporary agencies, and the geographic area for recruitment.
- Questions about whether employers have conducted screenings (e.g., drug tests) and assessments (e.g., skill assessments) of job applicants or current workers, what skills were assessed, and what assessment methods were used.

5. Labor turnover and vacancies

Current job vacancies by occupation (summary information)

Number of observations: 27

Number of observations where this data item was collected in a survey: 17. Employer survey (17), Household survey (0)

Document Categories where this data item appeared: Information needs assessment studies (10), Labor market analysis guides (5), State and local WIB plans and materials (0), WIB labor market studies and reports (4), Welfare reform and welfare to work documents (0), Education plans and materials (2), Community audit proposals (0), and Other studies and reports (6)

Local geographic area definitions used: MSA (1), Multi-county (5), County (6), City (1), WIA Area (6), Subcounty or subcity (1), Other local area (2), Unspecified (2).

Is this data item provided by the LMI system? No. Although some states conduct vacancy surveys, vacancy data are not available routinely in all states. The Job Vacancy Statistics Work Group, involving states, the Bureau of Labor Statistics, and the Employment and Training Administration, has developed data collection methods and tools that will become available soon to states.

Discussion: The Work Group has identified this data item as an unmet data need.

Of the twenty-seven observations, fifteen were found in needs assessment studies or labor market analysis guides, indicating a recognized need. Seventeen observations were on

surveys that actually collected vacancy data, indicating lack of available information to meet the need.

Job vacancy data provide an example in which the approaches to continuous improvement recommended by the Work Group are being applied. The Job Vacancy Statistics Work Group is developing a standard methodology, building on existing best practices, the technical expertise of BLS, and funding resources of ETA. The Workforce Information Council may need to make a policy judgment on whether providing standardized data across all areas is needed.

Labor turnover by industry

Number of observations: 20

Number of observations where this data item was collected in a survey: 1. Employer survey (1), Household survey (0)

Document Categories where this data item appeared: Information needs assessment studies (13), Labor market analysis guides (5), State and local WIB plans and materials (0), WIB labor market studies and reports (0), Welfare reform and welfare to work documents (0), Education plans and materials (0), Community audit proposals (0), and Other studies and reports (2)

Local geographic area definitions used: MSA (1), Multi-county (3), County (4), City (2), WIA Area (5), Subcounty or subcity (0), Other local area (0), Unspecified (0).

Is this data item provided by the LMI system? No. Some states have developed turnover information by industry using wage record data.

Discussion: Eighteen of the twenty observations for this data item were on needs assessment studies and labor market analysis guides, indicating a recognized need. There was little effort to collect industry turnover data, however. Efforts to collect occupational turnover information were more frequent, as noted above.

Employee retention and turnover

Number of observations: 11

Number of observations where this data item was collected in a survey: 10. Employer survey (10), Household survey (0)

Document Categories where this data item appeared: Information needs assessment studies (0), Labor market analysis guides (0), State and local WIB plans and materials (0), WIB labor market studies and reports (5), Welfare reform and welfare to work documents (0), Education plans and materials (0), Community audit proposals (0), and Other studies and reports (6)

Local geographic area definitions used: MSA (0), Multi-county (0), County (4), City (0), WIA Area (4), Subcounty or subcity (0), Other local area (0), Unspecified (0).

Is this data item provided by the LMI system? No.

Discussion: Employer survey questions for this data item generally dealt with the reasons for turnover and what employers are doing to increase retention.

6. Benefits

Number of observations: The review identified observations for three formulations of benefits data: benefits by industry, by occupation, and benefits provided by individual employers. No single data item on benefits had 20 or more observations across all reports, or 10 or more observations on reports involving surveys. When taken together, however, these three items totaled 34 observations.

Number of observations where this data item was collected in a survey: Two of the three benefits data items were collected a total of 22 times (benefits by occupation, 10 times, and benefits provided by individual employers, 12 times). Benefits data items were collected on employer surveys twenty times and on household survey two times.

Document Categories where this data item appeared: Information needs assessment studies (3), Labor market analysis guides (5), State and local WIB plans and materials (0), WIB labor market studies and reports (5), Welfare reform and welfare to work documents (0), Education plans and materials (0), Community audit proposals (0), and Other studies and reports (11)

Local geographic area definitions used: MSA (1), Multi-county (7), County (11), City (1), WIA Area (5), Subcounty or subcity (0), Other local area (4), Unspecified (2).

Is this data item provided by the LMI system? No. Some states conduct benefit surveys, and a new Benefits Consortium has recently been formed, with ETA funding support, to work on development of data collection methods for use by states.

Discussion: The Work Group has identified this data item as an unmet data need.

Of the thirty-four observations, eight were found in needs assessment studies or labor market analysis guides, indicating a recognized need. Benefits data appeared twenty-two times on the collected surveys reviewed, indicating lack of available information to meet the need.

As with job vacancy data, benefits data provide an example in which the approaches to continuous improvement recommended by the Work Group are being applied. The new

Benefits Consortium will work on developing a standard methodology, building on existing best practices, the technical expertise of BLS, and funding resources of ETA.

7. Wages and compensation

Wages by occupation

Number of observations: 71

Number of observations where this data item was collected in a survey: 23. Employer survey (21), Household survey (2)

Document Categories where this data item appeared: Information needs assessment studies (23), Labor market analysis guides (7), State and local WIB plans and materials (2), WIB labor market studies and reports (16), Welfare reform and welfare to work documents (0), Education plans and materials (3), Community audit proposals (2), and Other studies and reports (17)

Local geographic area definitions used: MSA (5), Multi-county (15), County (19), City (1), WIA Area (12), Subcounty or subcity (1), Other local area (3), Unspecified (2).

Is this data item provided by the LMI system? Yes. See discussion of the OES program under employment by occupation, above.

Discussion: A number of the information needs assessment studies called for the occupational wage data to be more current. Surveys that collected occupational wage data usually limited the data to a selected list of occupations, or to occupations for which employers had current vacancies or expected to be in greatest demand. Some surveys asked about entry-level wages, shift-differentials, or education level.

While the Work Group did not identify occupational wage data as an unmet data need, the frequency with which occupational wage data are collected on local surveys suggests that the existing data may not be timely or detailed enough. Also, occupational wage time-series are not provided, which could be a useful indicator of changes in supply-demand conditions.

Average wages by industry

Number of observations: 47

Number of observations where this data item was collected in a survey: 1. Employer survey (1), Household survey (0)

Document Categories where this data item appeared: Information needs assessment studies (19), Labor market analysis guides (8), State and local WIB plans and materials

(3), WIB labor market studies and reports (8), Welfare reform and welfare to work documents (0), Education plans and materials (0), Community audit proposals (4), and Other studies and reports (5)

Local geographic area definitions used: MSA (6), Multi-county (6), County (9), City (1), WIA Area (10), Subcounty or subcity (2), Other local area (1), Unspecified (0).

Is this data item provided by the LMI system? Yes. See discussion under industry employment level, above.

Discussion: See discussion under industry employment level, above. Nearly half of the observations for this data item were found in needs assessment studies and labor market analysis guides, indicating a recognized data need. Where this data appeared in the reports reviewed, it generally was from existing sources.

8. Commuting patterns

Commuting data

Number of observations: 26

Number of observations where this data item was collected in a survey: 6. Employer survey (3), Household survey (3)

Document Categories where this data item appeared: Information needs assessment studies (11), Labor market analysis guides (1), State and local WIB plans and materials (0), WIB labor market studies and reports (6), Welfare reform and welfare to work documents (1), Education plans and materials (0), Community audit proposals (0), and Other studies and reports (6)

Local geographic area definitions used: MSA (1), Multi-county (4), County (9), City (0), WIA Area (7), Subcounty or subcity (0), Other local area (1), Unspecified (1).

Is this data item provided by the LMI system? Yes. Commuting data is universally available from the decennial Census of Population. While very detailed, this information quickly becomes dated. The American Community Survey will provide more current commuting data. Some states are providing more current commuting information using sources such as matching wage record data with state drivers' license files. The Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) program also provides commuting information for participating states.

Discussion: Eleven of the twenty-six observations for this data item were found in needs assessment studies or labor market analysis guides, indicating a recognized need. Of the remaining seventeen observations, six were on collected surveys and eight were

uses of existing Census data. Emerging new sources, especially the American Community Survey, will address the need for more current commuting data.

9. General demographics

Population level and trends

Number of observations: 56

Number of observations where this data item was collected in a survey: 0. Employer survey (0), Household survey (0)

Document Categories where this data item appeared: Information needs assessment studies (12), Labor market analysis guides (7), State and local WIB plans and materials (2), WIB labor market studies and reports (8), Welfare reform and welfare to work documents (0), Education plans and materials (3), Community audit proposals (6), and Other studies and reports (17)

Local geographic area definitions used: MSA (5), Multi-county (10), County (16), City (4), WIA Area (9), Subcounty or subcity (2), Other local area (1), Unspecified (1).

Is this data item provided by the LMI system? Yes. See population composition by demographic characteristics, above.

Discussion: The case review indicates that standard sources are being used for this data item.

Population composition by demographic characteristics

Number of observations: 55

Number of observations where this data item was collected in a survey: 4. Employer survey (0), Household survey (4)

Document Categories where this data item appeared: Information needs assessment studies (16), Labor market analysis guides (10), State and local WIB plans and materials (1), WIB labor market studies and reports (3), Welfare reform and welfare to work documents (1), Education plans and materials (3), Community audit proposals (4), and Other studies and reports (17)

Local geographic area definitions used: MSA (3), Multi-county (8), County (17), City (2), WIA Area (7), Subcounty or subcity (2), Other local area (3), Unspecified (0).

Is this data item provided by the LMI system? Yes. The Census Bureau provides demographic information, although the currency and level of detail deteriorate as the

geographic area becomes smaller. The American Community Survey will help alleviate this problem.

Discussion: The most frequently cited demographic characteristics found in the case review included age, gender, race/ethnicity, and education attainment. The case review indicates that standard sources are being used for this data item.

10. Terms of employment

Terms of employment

Number of observations: 13

Number of observations where this data item was collected in a survey: 12. Employer survey (10), Household survey (2)

Document Categories where this data item appeared: Information needs assessment studies (1), Labor market analysis guides (0), State and local WIB plans and materials (0), WIB labor market studies and reports (2), Welfare reform and welfare to work documents (0), Education plans and materials (0), Community audit proposals (0), and Other studies and reports (10)

Local geographic area definitions used: MSA (0), Multi-county (7), County (5), City (0), WIA Area (1), Subcounty or subcity (0), Other local area (1), Unspecified (0).

Is this data item provided by the LMI system? This data item includes a variety of types of information, such as hours, shifts, part-time/full-time schedules, use of leased employees, seasonal and temporary work, and practices such as employee involvement and use of teams. This type of information is generally not provided by the LMI system.

Discussion: The variety of specific information collected and the low number of observations do not indicate an unmet data need.

11. Employer training needs and practices

Employer training needs and practices

Number of observations: 54

Number of observations where this data item was collected in a survey: 51. Employer survey (51), Household survey (0)

Document Categories where this data item appeared: Information needs assessment studies (0), Labor market analysis guides (2), State and local WIB plans and materials (0), WIB labor market studies and reports (27), Welfare reform and welfare to work documents (0), Education plans and materials (5), Community audit proposals (0), and Other studies and reports (20)

Local geographic area definitions used: MSA (0), Multi-county (9), County (21), City (0), WIA Area (15), Subcounty or subcity (0), Other local area (1), Unspecified (0).

Is this data item provided by the LMI system? No.

Discussion: The Work Group has identified this data item as an unmet need.

This data item was the most frequently collected item among the surveys reviewed, appearing exclusively on employer surveys, most of which were sponsored by WIBs and local business groups. These surveys asked a variety of types of questions, including whether the business provided training and if not, why not; employer opinions about the training programs they need; what types of computer skills employees needed; what factors were affecting training needs; what methods of training were being used; training needs by broad types of skills (basic skills, thinking skills, etc.); percent of the company's budget set aside for training; the occupations or job titles for which they provided the most training; and preferences for training to be provided on- or off-site.

12. Income and cost of living

Personal income

Number of observations: 38

Number of observations where this data item was collected in a survey: 1. Employer survey (0), Household survey (1)

Document Categories where this data item appeared: Information needs assessment studies (10), Labor market analysis guides (6), State and local WIB plans and materials (3), WIB labor market studies and reports (2), Welfare reform and welfare to work documents (0), Education plans and materials (3), Community audit proposals (0), and Other studies and reports (13)

Local geographic area definitions used: MSA (3), Multi-county (5), County (13), City (1), WIA Area (6), Subcounty or subcity (0), Other local area (1), Unspecified (0).

Is this data item provided by the LMI system? Yes. The Bureau of Economic Analysis provides personal income data for states, metropolitan areas, and counties.

Discussion: The review indicates that standard data sources are being used.

13. Information about the firm

List of individual employers, with industry designation and contact information

Number of observations: 37

Number of observations where this data item was collected in a survey: 2. Employer survey (2), Household survey (0)

Document Categories where this data item appeared: Information needs assessment studies (13), Labor market analysis guides (5), State and local WIB plans and materials (0), WIB labor market studies and reports (7), Welfare reform and welfare to work documents (0), Education plans and materials (1), Community audit proposals (1), and Other studies and reports (10)

Local geographic area definitions used: MSA (3), Multi-county (5), County (12), City (2), WIA Area (7), Subcounty or subcity (0), Other local area (3), Unspecified (2).

Is this data item provided by the LMI system? Yes. The Covered Employment and Wages program provides an employer list, although in most states it is not available due to confidentiality restrictions. The ALMIS Database provides an employer list purchased from a private sector provider. States are to provide customer access to this list through their labor market information delivery systems.

Discussion: This information is important for WIBs and other local workforce development organizations in their outreach to employers.

Firm characteristics

Number of observations: 34

Number of observations where this data item was collected in a survey: 24. Employer survey (24), Household survey (0)

Document Categories where this data item appeared: Information needs assessment studies (1), Labor market analysis guides (3), State and local WIB plans and materials (0), WIB labor market studies and reports (20), Welfare reform and welfare to work documents (0), Education plans and materials (0), Community audit proposals (0), and Other studies and reports (9)

Local geographic area definitions used: MSA (0), Multi-county (6), County (15), City (1), WIA Area (10), Subcounty or subcity (0), Other local area (2), Unspecified (5).

Is this data item provided by the LMI system? Some characteristics are available, but generally are not published by individual firm or establishment.

Discussion: Among the characteristics noted were whether the business was accessible by public transportation, whether the company was considering relocating and if so, why; whether the company uses the Internet or is ISO 9000/ISQ 9000 certified; length of operation; products and services; and type of ownership.

Firm financial data

Number of observations: 16

Number of observations where this data item was collected in a survey: 8. Employer survey (8), Household survey (0)

Document Categories where this data item appeared: Information needs assessment studies (1), Labor market analysis guides (2), State and local WIB plans and materials (0), WIB labor market studies and reports (9), Welfare reform and welfare to work documents (0), Education plans and materials (1), Community audit proposals (0), and Other studies and reports (3)

Local geographic area definitions used: MSA (1), Multi-county (4), County (6), City (0), WIA Area (3), Subcounty or subcity (0), Other local area (0), Unspecified (0).

Is this data item provided by the LMI system? This data item includes topics such as sales, revenue, payroll, and total compensation. The LMI system provides total payroll by employer from the Covered Employment and Wages program.

Discussion: The variety of specific data does not indicate an unmet data need. Also, where this type of data was collected, it was used to interpret other survey data.

14. Uncategorized data items

Other general LMI indicators

Number of observations: 35

Number of observations where this data item was collected in a survey: 12. Employer survey (1), Household survey (11)

Document Categories where this data item appeared: Information needs assessment studies (12), Labor market analysis guides (4), State and local WIB plans and materials (0), WIB labor market studies and reports (4), Welfare reform and welfare to work documents (0), Education plans and materials (0), Community audit proposals (2), and Other studies and reports (12)

Local geographic area definitions used: MSA (1), Multi-county (6), County (10), City (2), WIA Area (6), Subcounty or subcity (0), Other local area (2), Unspecified (3).

Is this data item provided by the LMI system? Some items are available, such as migration data.

Discussion: Among the items included are labor productivity, absentee rates, number of aliens and immigrants, populations at risk of not being able to find or keep good jobs, number of workers likely to change employment, migration, characteristics of the underemployed, and general labor availability data.

Other employer information

Number of observations: 21

Number of observations where this data item was collected in a survey: 17. Employer survey (17), Household survey (0)

Document Categories where this data item appeared: Information needs assessment studies (3), Labor market analysis guides (1), State and local WIB plans and materials (0), WIB labor market studies and reports (10), Welfare reform and welfare to work documents (0), Education plans and materials (1), Community audit proposals (0), and Other studies and reports (6)

Local geographic area definitions used: MSA (0), Multi-county (6), County (8), City (0), WIA Area (3), Subcounty or subcity (1), Other local area (1), Unspecified (1).

Is this data item provided by the LMI system? No.

Discussion: This data item included topics such as identifying the major problems and issues affecting the firm, ratings of business cost factors, impact of changing technology on the company workforce and wages, management techniques such as use of teams, and factors affecting growth and expansion.

Organization Review

The Work Group asked nine organizations that represent a wide range of labor market information users to review an initial list of unmet local information needs. This step was undertaken because the input received through the case review and the focus groups was not necessarily representative of all local labor market information users. The Work Group wanted feedback from the organizations as to whether the initial list was on target, and whether any major needs had been missed. The questionnaire is shown in Appendix 4.

Four responses were received. One of the four responses provided comments but did not include the completed questionnaire.

Table 9. Organization responses on importance of type of information to their members and constituents			
Type of Information	Very important	Somewhat important	Not important
<i>Employer training needs</i>	1	2	
<i>Hiring difficulty</i>	2	1	
<i>Employer recruitment, assessment and hiring practices</i>		2	1
<i>Employer opinion of the skills of workers</i>	1	2	
<i>Terms of employment</i>		3	
<i>Employer hiring requirements</i>	2		1
<i>New hires</i>	1	2	
<i>Employee retention and turnover</i>	1	1	1
<i>Cost of living</i>	2		1
<i>Commuting patterns</i>	1	1	1
<i>Labor supply</i>	2		1
<i>Benefits Information</i>		3	

Table 9 shows the responses on the importance of the type of information in the list of initial findings to the organizations' members and constituents. All items were rated as very important or somewhat important by at least one of the three organizations. Six items were rated as not important by at least one organization. The diversity of responses probably reflects the diversity of the organizations and their constituents, which include economic developers, human

resource professionals, and career information providers.

One organization suggested an additional data item that would be useful: productivity data at the local or metropolitan level.

Comments on individual data items are shown in Table 10. These comments are quite helpful in understanding how the information is or would be used.

In addition, comments from one organization noted that, in a "perfect" world with unlimited funds, the initial list of unmet needs represented information that state and local users would like to have on a local level. This comment recognizes the real trade-offs that exist between the cost of local data and the competing priorities for resources. It was also noted that a number of state or consortia initiatives are underway to address some of the information items on the list, and that these efforts need to be more widely publicized. These activities have been noted in the discussion of individual data items earlier in this chapter.

This same organization also commented that one of the most important findings was the need for education of labor market information customers on what information currently is available, how to easily access it, and how best to interpret the data. The Work Group's recommendations are consistent with this comment.

The questionnaire also asked for ratings of importance of having information at three local geographic levels. Local labor market area was rated as very important by all three organizations. County and workforce investment area received one response each for the three levels of importance (very, somewhat and not important).

Table 10. Organization Comments	
Type of Information	Comment
<i>Employer training needs</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information provided on questions [for the first four items listed] will highlight the gap between labor market needs and training and development programs. Furthermore, this information demonstrates the necessity for business leader involvement in local training and development programs. Helpful in identifying emerging real-world skills and knowledges needed by employers.
<i>Hiring difficulty</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Currently, some of our members are hiring survey firms as a way to get at this data. I'm sure they would love more systematic data. This information varies greatly by organizational size and industry necessitating detailed data collection. Another component complementing hiring difficulty is recruitment source yield, including quality of applicants, such information would be useful, as well as information on employee referral programs with or without incentives. Data seem very local and perishable.
<i>Employer recruitment, assessment and hiring practices</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data seem very local and perishable.
<i>Employer opinion of the skills of workers</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This would be most valuable if the data were available by occupation or industry. Data seem very local and perishable.
<i>Terms of employment</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This information, tracked over time, will indicate business needs and labor market trends/changes
<i>Employer hiring requirements</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This allows employers to hire the qualified labor necessary today, while forecasting future needs, fitting into the Human Resource (HR) planning process. There are also training and development implications in this information. This identifies emerging real-world skills and knowledge – very important for career planning.
<i>New hires</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our members speak at great length to the quality of hires. This identifies emerging real-world skills and knowledge – very important for career planning.
<i>Employee retention and turnover</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seems more important for business planning/ economic development. Also very local and so expensive on a large scale. Data needs seem more driven by specific needs – plant location for example – and so could be done on demand.
<i>Cost of living</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Note: This is one of the most important issues for our members. However, we have a bias on this as [this organization's] members gather cost of living data. We do have methodological and resource constraints that prevent the project from having as full a coverage as possible. We would certainly entertain strategic partnerships with state workforce agencies or local WIBs to gather the data in areas that we don't fully cover. Seems more important for business planning/ economic development. Also very local and so expensive on a large scale. Data needs seem more driven by specific needs – plant location for example – and so could be done on demand.
<i>Commuting patterns</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is critical data for defining regional interactions and many strategy projects depend on it. Yet, we only have data from the Census, which won't be available until this fall or early next year. In the meantime, we're working with 1990 data. Seems more important for business planning/ economic development. Also very local and so expensive on a large scale. Data needs seem more driven by specific needs – plant location for example – and so could be done on demand. This information will allow for planning by local communities and for telecommuting programs.
<i>Labor supply</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is important if you can link the labor supply with skill data (and in turn link the skill data to industry needs). Seems more important for business planning/ economic development. Also very local and so expensive on a large scale. Data needs seem more driven by specific needs – plant location for example – and so could be done on demand. This information also ties into the HR planning process.
<i>Benefits Information</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Industry detail would be sufficient.

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Findings: The Focus Groups

The primary purpose of the focus groups was to gather input on the participants' needs for local labor market information, including identifying the types of questions the participants needed to have answered. The focus groups also provided the opportunity to get input on information delivery needs and preferences.

Six focus groups were conducted in late 2001, involving a total of about 45 information users who attended the NASWA Labor Market Information Conference, and the National Association of State Workforce Board Chairs meeting.

The focus group sessions used the following questions:

1. What is currently working, what is not? What do we need to start doing, or start doing better; what do we need to preserve, what do we need to stop doing?
2. What questions do you and the organizations you represent need answered?
3. How can the system better understand and serve local needs? How do you define "local"?
4. What media protocols would be most useful?
5. What are your recommendations for next steps for the Local Data Needs Work Group?

Summary of Results

What are the questions focus group participants and the organizations they represent need answered?

The questions that need to be answered are best summarized by the following responses:

"What are the projected needs and do we have individuals in the pipeline to meet those needs?"

"Who are our customers and what are their needs?"

These responses address both the supply and demand sides of the labor market. Other responses elaborated on demand and supply questions:

Concerning demand, participants need to know projected business needs, specifically mentioning small and medium sized business growth, and surveying businesses to identify their needs. They also want to know about specific job vacancies and the skill requirements and wages of those vacancies.

Participants provided many more comments on the supply side of the equation. The most frequent questions dealt with identifying the size and characteristics of the labor supply,

both generally and identifying specific individuals. They want to know who are the unemployed, the underemployed, and who is not in the workforce but might become a job seeker. They want to know where these people are located and what their skills are. Among the most frequent comment was the need for information on the “skills gap,” the difference between the skills employers need and the skills possessed by the existing workforce, especially the unemployed, the underemployed, and those not in the labor force.

In addition, there is a need for information on the education and training programs in the local area and what skills they are providing, that is, how the programs are helping close the skills gap.

How do focus group participants define “local”?

The most frequent definitions of “local” geography were (number of responses in parentheses):

- Local labor market area (including responses for commuting area and economic region) (5),
- County (4),
- Workforce Investment Area (2), and
- City (1).

The participants recognized that labor market areas can be defined by commuting patterns and may not be consistent with political boundaries.

What needs to be done better: Specific Data Needs

The following specific types of data were identified as needed, ranked by the number of times mentioned (shown in parentheses):

1. Skills information (20), including:
 - a. skill requirements of businesses,
 - b. skill profiles of occupations, and career ladders,
 - c. skills possessed by available workers,
 - d. information on individuals “in the pipeline” , i.e., in skills training,
 - e. analysis of the skills supply and demand, and identification of the skills gap, and
 - f. skill assessment tools.
2. Labor force characteristics and labor supply (14), both summary data and information about individuals. Specific types of detail mentioned include:
 - a. Underemployment,

- b. dislocated workers,
 - c. educational characteristics (graduates from programs, certifications) and literacy, and
 - d. information on segments of the population such as dropouts and individuals “not entering the system.”
- 3. Performance information (10). These comments addressed performance measurement for workforce development programs, and included some critiques of the Department of Labor’s WIA performance measures. Participants expressed needs for long-term tracking of program results through longitudinal data, comparability of performance information across programs and funding streams, and measuring performance relative to need.
- 4. Forecasts and projections (7). These comments dealt with the need for forecasts of labor demand, with specific mentions of “business forecasts” and industry clusters.
- 5. Cost of living and living wage (4). These comments concerned having cost of living information that is comparable across states and areas, and the expense of accessing the currently available data.
- 6. Management information (4). These comments were about management information for workforce programs, which is outside the scope of this project.
- 7. Wages and benefits (4). Comments about wage information called for “real time” wage data that are comparable across areas. One comment called for wages to be included in analysis of commuting patterns. Benefits was mentioned in the context of cost of living comparisons.
- 8. Vacancies (2). These comments concerned information about current local job vacancies, including skill requirements.
- 9. Youth information (1). This comment asked for assistance in identifying the best available data on youth, and suggested providing a web directory of data sources and evaluation of sources.
- 10. Commuting patterns (1). This comment called for current commuting patterns data that are more current than the decennial Census data, and providing wage and demographic detail along with the commuting information.
- 11. Military/Defense employment (1). This comment asked for assistance in getting data on employment at military installations.

What needs to be done better: Formats for Information Delivery

Focus group participants expressed needs for better formats for information delivery (35 comments). Specific concerns included:

- Formats designed for lay users rather than or in addition to technicians or advanced users (10 comments)

- Formats that are flexible and customizable (5 comments)
- Formats that use industry or occupational clusters (3 comments)
- “Pocket” information that provides key indicators or highlights (3 comments)
- Use of charts and maps (2 comments)
- Formats organized by sector and geographic area rather than by data topic (1 comment)
- Formats that facilitated comparison of data across sectors or geographic areas (1 comment)

What needs to be done better: Customer Feedback

Focus group participants said that customer feedback should be solicited more often, and from more audiences, especially local WIBs and employers. They offered suggestions on ways to solicit customer feedback, including focus groups, participation in conferences, and surveys of WIBs. (15 comments)

What needs to be done better: Best Practices

Focus group participants recommended that best practices in providing workforce information be identified and shared among states. (6 comments)

What needs to be done better: Access to Workforce Information

Focus group participants wanted to be able to use the Internet to access lists of or links to sites that provided information (6 comments) on such as wage information, county level data, youth data, high school dropouts. They wanted links to all state LMI web sites, and related federal, state and independent sites, including Commerce and Education data.

One comment suggested creating an LMI portal searchable down to county and local information and including evaluation of data sources.

One comment expressed concern over lack of data access due to State confidentiality laws.

What needs to be done better: Data Timeliness

Focus group participants frequently said they need “real-time” data (5 comments). They were especially dissatisfied with the age of wage record data (2 comments).

What needs to be done better: User Education

Focus group participants provided 5 comments on improving user’s awareness and understanding of labor market information. One comment suggested providing a “primer”

on the significance and utility of LMI. Another comment suggested that “many WIBs are buying information they could access for free because they don’t know what is available.”

What needs to be done better: Access to information across state lines.

Focus group participants want to be able to access information from other states, to allow comparisons and to assist customers who are considering relocation. (4 comments)

What needs to be done better: Analysis

Focus group participants wanted more analysis and interpretation of workforce conditions. Specific types of analysis mentioned included trend analysis and impact analysis. (4 comments)

What needs to be done better: Data Quality

Focus group participants wanted information about data quality and asked for evaluations of data sources to be provided. (4 comments)

What needs to be done better: Data Standardization

Focus group participants wanted information to be standardized across data producing agencies and a common language used across states. (4 comments)

What needs to be done better: LMI Staff Development

Focus group participants had three comments concerning LMI staff. While one comment said that “what is working” is the great amount of knowledge among economists, the other two comments said improvement is needed in LMI staff’s presentation skills and that they needed additional capability and understanding.

What needs to be done better: Communication

Focus group participants called for greater communication between data producing agencies and between Labor and Education. (2 comments)

What needs to be done better: Funding

Focus group participants suggested that funding be “driven down”, along with accountability, and that funding be provided to locals “instead of national level consultants for non-local information and reports.” (2 comments)

What media protocols would be most useful?

Focus group participants provided 8 comments concerning the media for delivering labor market information. The type of media mentioned most often was the Internet (5 comments) including interactive web sites. The need for print products was also noted.

Other comments were that selection of the media should not slow down the availability of the data, and that a medium should be picked and marketed.

Appendices

Appendix 1. Work Group Charter

Appendix 2. List of Reports Included in Case Review

Appendix 3. Data Items in the Case Review, by Data Needs Category, Number of Observations, and Geographic Detail

Appendix 4. Questionnaire on Initial List of Unmet Data Needs

Appendix 1. Work Group Charter

CHARGE TO LOCAL DATA NEEDS WORK GROUP

The leadership of the Workforce Information Council and the National Association of State Workforce Agencies met on April 10, 2001, to clarify the roles of the two organizations, agree on joint priorities, and identify joint activities. We agreed to address jointly the issue of meeting customers' needs for local labor market data. Many customers have expressed the need for more or different local information, but these needs often are not defined well enough to determine how best to respond to them.

Therefore, the Local Data Needs Work Group is charged with:

- Working with customers, particularly employers, workforce investment boards, one-stop center operators, and career-technical education, to better define their needs for local labor market information. At least the following questions will be addressed:
 - What specific local data do they need that they are not presently getting?
 - What geographic level of detail do customers want, i.e., how do they define "local"?
 - How do they want the information presented, such as the media used, format and the frequency of delivery?
- Comparing the needs expressed by customers with the type of labor market information that is universally available in all states, resulting in identifying unmet information needs.
- Developing recommendations on ways in which local labor market information can be better presented to address customer needs.

The Workforce Information Council and NASWA hope to jointly endorse the recommendations of the work group, implement and support the recommendations on the national level, and distribute them to all state workforce agencies for consideration and implementation.

The work group is asked to deliver its report and recommendations to the Council and NASWA by July 1, 2001.

Appendix 2. Reports Included in the Case Review

Description or Title	State	Document Source	Survey Involved?				Type of Survey		
			No Survey	Survey Planned	Survey Conducted	Response Rate	Employer	Household	Other
Needs assessment studies									
Requests and Uses for ES-202 Data 1999-2000	US	Other: ES-202 Policy Council	X						
Socioeconomic Data for Economic Development: An Assessment, 1999	US	Economic Dev Agency: U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration	X						
"Toward Order from Chaos: State Efforts to Reform Workforce Development Systems"	US	Educational Institution: University of California at Berkeley	X						
Data Needs of the Imperial Valley and California-Baja California, 2000	CA	Educational Institution: California Center for Border and Regional Economic Studies (CCBRES), San Diego State University, Imperial Valley Campus	X						
Kentucky Workforce Board: LMI Priority Data Items, 2000	KY	State WIB		X			X		
Gaps in LMI as Identified in the 3-year Strategic Plans LWIB, Pennsylvania 2001	PA	Local WIB	X						
Capital Area Michigan Works Regional Economic Development Team Assessment	MI	Local WIB			X	50%	X		
LMI Regional Forums: What Our Customers Said, Pennsylvania Fall 1999	PA	State Agency: Department of Labor and Industry, Center for Workforce Information and Analysis	X						
Texas One-Stop LMI Workshop	TX	State Agency: Texas Workforce Commission, Labor Market Information	X						
Central Puget Sound Regional Skills Gap Consortium, State of Washington 2001	WA	Local WIB	X						
Virginia Economic Bridge, Regional Community Audit Work Session, 2001	VA	Economic Development Agency	X						
LMI customer Feedback, Iowa 1999-2000	IA	State Agency: Iowa Workforce Development	X						
Workforce Opportunity Council (WOC Information and Data Gathering Initiative, 2000	NH	State WIB	X						
Expanded Use of Employer-Provided Information, New Hampshire, 1997	NH	State WIB			X		X		
Needs and Alternatives for Plant Closing and Layoff Statistics, 2000	US	Other: Workforce Information Council			X	64%			
User Needs and Labor Market Information Products, 1994	US	Other: ETA/DOL Committee	X						

Description or Title	State	Document Source	Survey Involved?				Type of Survey		
			No Survey	Survey Planned	Survey Conducted	Response Rate	Employer	Household	Other
Labor Market Information Focus Groups, Feb 1998, Michigan	MI	State Agency: Michigan Jobs Commission, Office of Labor Market Information	X						
Labor market analysis guides									
Developing a Community Development Vision, Including Charlotte-Mecklenburg Workforce Development	US	Local WIB		X			X		
HUD, Welfare to Work, Assessing the Local Labor Market	US	Other: U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development	X						
Conducting A Community Audit, 2000	US	Other: ETA, Office of Audit Services	X						
Finding and Using Labor Market Information for Economic Development, 2000	US	Other: AFL-CIO Working for America Institute	X						
Connecting the Dots, The Labor Market Information View of Workforce Development, 2000	TX	State Agency: Texas Workforce Commission	X						
American Economic Development Council (AEDC) Data Standards and American Community Network (ACN) Odyssey	US	Economic Development Agency	X						
State and local WIB plans and materials									
Sonoma County, California, Strategic Five-Year Local Workforce Investment Plan	CA	Local WIB	X						
Atlantic Cape May Workforce Investment Board Five-Year Strategic Plan, 2000	NJ	Local WIB	X						
Three Rivers Workforce Investment Board Strategic Plan 2000-2003	PA	Local WIB	X						
New York State WIA Plan Part III Assessment	NY	State WIB	X						
Building a Highly Competitive Workforce: The 2000-2001 Strategic Plan, 2000	NC	State WIB	X						
WIB labor market studies and reports									
California Cooperation Occupational Information Systems, 1999-2000	CA	State Agency: California Employment Development Department, Labor Market Information Division			X		X		
Kankakee Valley WIB - Mid-Wage Occupation Survey - Analysis for Job Opportunities in Northwest Industries, 1999	IN	Local WIB			X		X		
Louisville WIB: Research to Evaluate Selected Workforce Demand Issues in Jefferson County Kentucky, 2000	KY	Local WIB			X		X		

Appendix 2. Reports Included in the Case Review

Description or Title	State	Document Source	Survey Involved?				Type of Survey		
			No Survey	Survey Planned	Survey Conducted	Response Rate	Employer	Household	Other
Jefferson County Kentucky Workforce Report, 2001	KY	Local WIB			X		X	X	
Survey of the Workforce Needs of Charlotte-Mecklenburg Employers, 2001	NC	Business Group			X	3%	X		
Platte Valley Workforce Development Center Employer Survey	NE	Local WIB			X		X		
Mercer County: A Report on the Workforce Investment Board's Focus Group Approach to Occupational Skills and Demand	NJ	Local WIB	X						
Suffolk County PIC 1999-2000 Employer Survey	NY	Local WIB			X	45%	X		
Analysis of New York State Employer Survey Results from NY Association of Training and Employment Professionals, 1995	NY				X	43%	X		
An Analysis of the Putnam County Employer Survey, 2000	NY	Economic Development Agency			X		X		
Ohio Works (Example of ERISS), 2000	OH	State Agency			X	27%	X		
An Analysis of the Oklahoma City Area Labor Force, 1999	OK	Business Group			X			X	
Oregon Community Profile, Example for Portland, 2000	OR	Economic Development Agency	X						
Workforce Training Needs and Practices of Washington State Employees, 1999	WA	State WIB			X	37%	X		
Yakima Tri-County WIB - Securing Key Industry Leadership for Learning Skills Project	WA	Local WIB		X			X		
Central Illinois Workforce Issues, 1997	IL	Local WIB			X	43%	X		
Labor Market Study for Southwest Michigan, 1998	MI	Local WIB		X	X	7%	X		
Lancaster County Workforce Development Survey	PA	Local WIB			X		X		
Report on a Survey on Oahu Employers' Training Needs, 2000	HI	Local WIB			X		X		
Team Pennsylvania Business Calling Program Survey	PA	State WIB			X		X		
Welfare reform/welfare to work documents									
Appalachian Partnership for Welfare Reform, First Annual Performance Assessment	OH	Other: Institute for Local Governmental Administration and Rural Development, Ohio University	X						
Tulsa's Ind Ex Program: A Business-Led Initiative for Welfare Reform and Economic Development, 1997	OK	Business Group			X		X	X	
Other studies and reports									
Alabama Area Workforce Studies	AL	Economic Development Agency			X			X	

Description or Title	State	Document Source	Survey Involved?				Type of Survey		
			No Survey	Survey Planned	Survey Conducted	Response Rate	Employer	Household	Other
California Job Creation Investment Fund Grant Program Progress Report, 1999	CA	State WIB		X			X		
Fresno County 2000 LMI Survey	CA	Business Group			X		X		
Los Angeles Workforce Preparation and Economic Development - From Harvest to Table the Food Preparation Industry Cluster, 2000	CA	Other: Regional Collaborative (includes AFL-CIO, Economic Development, PIC and others)			X	31%	X		
Survey of Stanislaus County Employer Needs, Workforce Preparation for the 21st Century, 1997	CA	Economic Development Agency			X	5%	X		
Denver Metro Job Vacancy Survey, 2000	CO	State WIB			X	50%	X		
Boone County Labor Survey Report Iowa, 2001	IA	State Agency			X			X	
Workforce Planning Guide, Kansas, 2001	KS	State Agency	X						
Maine Labor Force Analysis Project Reports, 2000	ME	Educational Institution			X		X	X	
Omaha Conditions Survey, 1998 (Omaha MSA -Four counties in Nebraska, 1 county in Iowa)	NE	Business Group			X			X	
Building A Ladder to Jobs and Higher Wages New York, 2000	NY	Other: Working Group on NYC's Low-Wage Labor Market	X						
New York/New Jobs: The Skills Crisis, Building a Jobs System that Works, 2000	NY	Other: Center for an Urban Future	X						
State of the Region Report, Performance Indicators for the Buffalo-Niagara Region, 1999 (8 counties of western NY, 2 regional m	NY		X						
Miami Valley (Ohio) Employment Outlook, 1997	OH	Business Group			X	19%	X		
Oregon Employer Survey, 2000	OR	State WIB			X	42%	X		
Cedar Park Labor Market Analysis Texas, 2000	TX	Business Group			X		X	X	
Labor Market Conditions in Southwest Wisconsin, 1999 (Report for Grant County)	WI	Educational Institution			X		X	X	
Outlook 2000: Detailed Occupational Projections and Labor Supply	WY	State Agency	X						
Iowa Nursing Workforce Employer Demand Survey, 2001 (Surveyed All Iowa Counties, 19 counties had no responses)	IA	Other: ICON- Iowa Council of Nurses			X	30%	X		
McLean County Workforce Issues 1998, Illinois	IL	Business Group			X		X		
Techforce Health Services Status Report for the Gulfcoast Region, Texas	TX	Other: Techforce 200 Inc.			X		X		

Appendix 2. Reports Included in the Case Review

Description or Title	State	Document Source	Survey Involved?				Type of Survey		
			No Survey	Survey Planned	Survey Conducted	Response Rate	Employer	Household	Other
North/Far North Region "BRAIN Plan", California	CA	Educational Institution			X	8%	X		
Yuba - Sutter Workforce Study, California	CA	Educational Institution	X						
Northern Tier Regional Planning and Development Commission, Pennsylvania, 2000	PA	Economic Development Agency	X						
2000 Oregon Population Survey - Summary of Findings	OR	State Agency: Office of Economic Analysis, Oregon State Library, Oregon Progress Board			X			X	
Education plans and materials									
Report of the Arizona Higher Education Study Committee, 1998	AZ	Other: Arizona Board of Regents, State Board of Directors of Community Colleges of Arizona	X						
Maryland Workforce Education Needs Assessment Survey, 1999	MD	Business Group			X	6%	X		
North Carolina Perkins State Plan, 1999-2000	NC	State Agency: Department of Public Instruction	X						
Mt. Hood Community College Survey and Focus Group Results, Survey: 1999, Report: 2000	OR	Educational Institution			X	11%	X		
Emerging and Evolving Occupations in Texas	TX	State Agency: Texas Workforce Commission		X			X		
Northeast Michigan's Environmental Scan and Career Development Report Card, 2000	MI	Local WIB	X						
Worker Training and retraining in Rhode Island, 1993	RI	State Agency: SOICC			X		X		
Community Audit Proposals									
Southwestern Pennsylvania Community Audit Project	PA	Local WIB		X				X	
Lancaster County (Pennsylvania) - A Proposal for a Demonstration Project Involving Advanced Community Audit Procedure	PA	Local WIB	X						
Montgomery County (Pennsylvania) WIB Community Audit Proposal, 2000	PA	Local WIB	X						

Item Number	Item	Number of Observations	Geographic Detail										
			National	State	Multi-State	Metropolitan Area	Multi-County	County	City	WIA	Sub county or subcity	Other local area	Un-specified
Labor supply and demand													
9	Unemployment level and/or unemployment rate	60	3	6	0	7	10	20	2	8	2	2	0
18	Industry employment level	60	3	6	0	6	12	17	1	13	1	1	0
19	Industry employment trends (past trends to current date)	57	4	7	0	7	9	13	1	12	1	1	2
73	Hiring difficulty	51	0	14	0	1	3	17	0	16	0	0	0
31	Employment level by Occupation	45	1	5	0	3	10	13	1	10	0	1	1
4	Labor Force size and trends	44	2	7	0	7	7	13	0	6	1	1	0
35	Projected job openings by occupation	44	1	6	0	2	7	14	0	10	0	2	2
7	Total Employment level and trends	44	1	6	0	4	10	12	2	6	0	3	0
34	Occupational employment forecasts (long-term)	41	3	9	0	2	5	8	0	10	0	2	2
21	Industry employment forecasts (long-term)	30	2	7	0	2	0	7	1	8	0	1	2
32	Occupational employment trends (past trends to current date)	24	2	5	0	2	3	6	0	5	0	1	0
29	Industry Clusters	21	1	1	0	1	2	6	1	8	0	0	1
20	Industry employment forecasts (short-term)	17	0	1	0	2	3	5	0	6	0	0	0
45	Other Occupational demand indicators	16	0	2	0	1	3	5	0	2	0	1	2
5	Labor Force Composition by demographic characteristics	15	0	2	0	2	1	6	0	2	0	0	2
27	Layoffs and plant closings by industry	13	0	3	0	1	1	4	2	1	1	0	0
75	New hires	12	0	0	0	0	1	6	0	3	0	0	2

Appendix 3. Data Items in the Case Review, by Data Needs Category, Number of Observations, and Geographic Detail

Item Number	Item	Number of Observations	Geographic Detail										
			National	State	Multi-State	Metropolitan Area	Multi-County	County	City	WIA	Sub county or subcity	Other local area	Un-specified
42	Industry distribution of employment	12	1	2	1	1	2	1	0	2	0	1	1
28	Occupational distribution of employment (staffing patterns)	12	0	4	1	0	0	1	1	3	0	0	2
83	Underemployment	12	0	1	0	0	4	2	0	3	0	1	1
33	Occupational employment forecasts (short-term)	12	0	1	0	0	4	4	0	3	0	0	0
6	Labor Force Participation Rates	11	1	1	0	3	1	5	0	0	0	0	0
15	Layoffs and plant closings	8	0	2	0	0	0	3	0	2	1	0	0
41	Layoffs and plant closings by occupation of affected workers	7	0	2	0	0	0	3	1	0	0	1	0
10	Unemployment composition by demographic characteristics	5	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	0
8	Employment composition by demographic characteristics	5	0	1	0	0	0	3	0	1	0	0	0
71	Employer hiring projections	3	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1
23	Business births and deaths	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
40	Unemployment claims by occupation	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
26	Unemployment claims by industry	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Skills supply and demand													
47	Skill requirements	41	1	9	1	2	8	7	1	7	0	1	4
61	Employer hiring requirements: Technical or occupational skills	22	0	0	0	0	3	11	0	7	0	0	1
63	Employer hiring requirements: Other	21	0	1	0	0	3	12	0	4	0	1	0
62	Employer hiring requirements: Basic or "soft" skills	18	0	0	0	0	4	8	0	6	0	0	0
64	Employer opinion on skills of current workers	17	1	2	0	0	2	6	1	5	0	0	0

Item Number	Item	Number of Observations	Geographic Detail										
			National	State	Multi-State	Metropolitan Area	Multi-County	County	City	WIA	Sub county or subcity	Other local area	Un-specified
65	Employer opinion on skills of workers in the general workforce	12	0	2	0	1	3	4	0	2	0	0	0
81	Career paths or career ladders	12	0	0	0	0	0	4	1	5	0	1	1
56	Employer satisfaction with existing education and training programs	10	0	3	0	0	4	1	0	1	0	0	1
54	Employment outcomes of students	6	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	1	0
48	Related education and training programs	4	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	2
Education supply and output													
58	Other - indicators of occupational supply/education data	44	1	10	0	2	7	10	0	2	2	5	5
53	Number of completions by program (past or expected)	22	1	4	0	1	5	4	0	2	2	0	3
51	Number and location of existing vocational-training programs	17	0	0	0	2	5	5	0	3	1	1	0
46	Education Level	15	0	3	0	0	2	4	0	4	0	0	2
52	Number of students enrolled by program	10	1	3	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	1	2
Employer recruitment, assessment and hiring practices													
60	Employer recruitment, assessment and hiring practices	37	0	4	0	0	4	19	1	7	0	2	0
Labor turnover and vacancies													
38	Current job vacancies by occupation (summary information)	27	0	3	0	1	5	6	1	6	1	2	2
25	Labor turnover by industry	20	1	3	1	1	3	4	2	5	0	0	0

Appendix 3. Data Items in the Case Review, by Data Needs Category, Number of Observations, and Geographic Detail

Item Number	Item	Number of Observations	Geographic Detail										
			National	State	Multi-State	Metropolitan Area	Multi-County	County	City	WIA	Sub county or subcity	Other local area	Un-specified
37	Job Banks/lists of specific current job openings for use in job search and placement	15	0	0	0	3	2	4	1	4	0	0	1
80	Employee retention and turnover	11	0	3	0	0	0	4	0	4	0	0	0
24	Current job vacancies by industry	11	1	1	0	2	2	2	0	2	1	0	0
39	Labor turnover by occupation	9	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	1	0	2	1
57	Job Seeker/Resume Banks for use in referral and hiring	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Benefits													
44	Benefits by occupation	18	0	2	0	1	4	6	0	2	0	3	0
67	Benefits provided, by individual employers	13	0	1	0	0	3	5	1	3	0	0	0
30	Benefits by industry	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2
Wages and compensation													
36	Wages by Occupation	71	2	9	2	5	15	19	1	12	1	3	2
22	Average wages by industry	47	4	8	0	6	6	9	1	10	2	1	0
78	Compensation practices	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Commuting patterns													
82	Commuting data	26	0	2	1	1	4	9	0	7	0	1	1
General demographics													
1	Population level and trends	56	2	5	1	5	10	16	4	9	2	1	1
3	Population composition by demographic characteristics	55	3	9	1	3	8	17	2	7	2	3	0
2	Population projections	16	1	2	1	2	2	3	1	3	1	0	0
Terms of employment													

Item Number	Item	Number of Observations	Geographic Detail										
			National	State	Multi-State	Metropolitan Area	Multi-County	County	City	WIA	Sub county or subcity	Other local area	Un-specified
77	Terms of employment	13	0	0	0	0	7	5	0	1	0	1	0
Employer training needs and practices													
66	Employer training needs and practices	54	0	8	0	0	9	21	0	15	0	1	0
Income and cost of living													
12	Personal Income	38	2	7	0	3	5	13	1	6	0	1	0
14	Cost of Living Indicators	15	1	3	0	1	1	3	0	3	0	2	1
13	Housing Costs	4	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	1	0
Information about the firm													
59	List of individual employers, with industry designation and contact information	37	0	3	0	3	5	12	2	7	0	3	2
72	Firm characteristics	34	0	0	0	0	6	15	1	10	0	2	0
76	Firm financial data	16	0	2	0	1	4	6	0	3	0	0	0
74	Union status	10	0	0	0	1	3	3	0	2	0	1	0
70	International trade data	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Uncategorized Items													
17	Other general LMI indicators	35	0	5	0	1	6	10	2	6	0	2	3
68	Other employer information	21	0	1	0	0	6	8	0	3	1	1	1
50	Other occupation characteristics	6	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	4

Appendix 4.

Questionnaire on Initial List of Unmet Data Needs

The following cover letter and questionnaire were sent to nine organizations that represent a wide range of labor market information users to solicit their feedback on the initial list of unmet local information needs. These organizations included:

- ACCRA
- Association of Computer-based Systems of Career Information (ACSCI)
- Association for Career-Technical Education
- National Association of State Economic Development Directors
- National Association of State Workforce Agencies
- National Association of Workforce Boards
- Society for Human Resource Management
- State Workforce Board Chairs Association
- U.S. Chamber of Commerce

Four responses were received, three with completed questionnaires and one with comments but without the questionnaire.



Workforce Information Council

Quality Information... Informed Choices

March 26, 2002

{inside address}

Dear _____,

Local information about the labor market is a key resource to employers, workforce and economic development organizations, career and technical education providers, and many other participants in the nation's economy. The Workforce Information Council and the National Association of State Workforce Agencies have joined together to explore how these needs can be better met by our labor market information system.

Our joint work group on local data needs has identified preliminary findings on specific local labor market information that appears to be needed but is not currently being provided on a consistent basis in all states. Before making recommendations, however, the work group is seeking your comments on behalf of your members.

We ask that you review the enclosed information and let us know your feedback, including any comments you wish to provide. You may return your response by e-mail or fax, as noted in the enclosure. We will appreciate receiving your response by April 12. Thank you!

Sincerely,

Dixie Sommers
Executive Director

Needs for Local Labor Market Information

Comment on Preliminary Findings

The following needs for new local labor market information have been identified by the Local Data Needs Work Group, a joint group of the Workforce Information Council and the National Association of State Workforce Agencies.

The Work Group is interested in your organization's comment on these findings:

- Does the list of needs reflect the experience of your members and constituents?
- Do your members and constituents have significant needs for local labor market information that are not noted in the findings?

The Work Group's findings are based on focus groups of workforce investment system representatives, and a review of reports generated by state and local workforce investment boards, state agencies, local economic development organizations, and others. This review included reports from special local surveys conducted by workforce investment boards and other organizations.

A number of information items identified as local data needs during this study have already been incorporated into the nation's labor market information system, such as occupational wages, unemployment rates, and industry and occupational employment. Continued enhancement and improvement of these data for use at the local level is underway. These data are not listed below, but will be addressed in the final report.

The Work Group requests your response to the list of findings beginning on the following page. Please return your response to Dixie Sommers, Workforce Information Council Executive Director, by e-mail to dixiesommers@cs.com, or by FAX to 614-292-1260. If you have questions or wish to discuss your comments, please contact Ms. Sommers by e-mail or at 614-688-3366.

Your response by April 12 will be greatly appreciated. Thank you!

Needs for Local Labor Market Information

Comment on Preliminary Findings

1. The following information items are not currently being provided by the “standard” labor market information program, that is, these items are not routinely available in all states (although some states may be providing some of them).

Please indicate the importance of this type of information to your members and constituents.

Type of Information	Very important	Somewhat important	Not important	Comment
A. <i>Employer training needs:</i> Information on training needs for current employees (incumbent workers).				
B. <i>Hiring difficulty:</i> Indicators of the difficulty of identifying and hiring new workers with required qualifications. Examples include data on length of time a vacancy is unfilled, and the number of applications per hire.				
C. <i>Employer recruitment, assessment and hiring practices:</i> Information on the recruitment methods used, the types of assessment used to screen applicants, and hiring practices such as use of incentives.				
D. <i>Employer opinion of the skills of workers:</i> Information on employers’ views of the skill level of their current workers				

Type of Information	Very important	Somewhat important	Not important	Comment
level of their current workers and/or the available workforce.				
E. <i>Terms of employment:</i> Information on topics such as part-time and full-time employment, and alternative employment arrangements such as use of temporary or leased employees.				
F. <i>Employer hiring requirements:</i> Information on employer's specific skill and qualification requirements for hiring new workers.				
G. <i>New hires:</i> Information on the number of new hires, and the occupation, industry, wages and other characteristics of new hires.				
H. <i>Employee retention and turnover:</i> Information on retention of workers and/or employee turnover, including occupation, industry and other characteristics of the workers or jobs.				
I. <i>Cost of living:</i> Information on the cost of living in local areas.				

Type of Information	Very important	Somewhat important	Not important	Comment
J. <i>Commuting patterns:</i> Information on patterns of commuting between place of residence and place of work (other than commuting pattern data from the decennial Census of Population).				
K. <i>Labor supply:</i> Detailed information on the size and characteristics of the available labor force, including demographic, educational, and skills characteristics.				
L. <i>Benefits Information:</i> Information on employer-provided benefits such as health insurance and retirement programs, by industry or occupation.				

2. Are there other types of information, not listed above, that are very important to your members and constituents and are not available to you through the labor market information program? If so, please identify them.

3. The Work Group found that the local geographic area targeted by focus group participants and in the cases reviewed were most often counties, workforce investment areas, and “labor market areas.” Please indicate the importance to your members and constituents of having labor market information for these local geographic areas.

Local Geographic Area	Very important	Somewhat important	Not important	Comment
A. County				
B. Workforce investment area				
C. Labor market area				

4. Are there other local geographic area definitions, not listed above, for which it is very important to your members and constituents that labor market information be provided? If so, please identify these area definitions and the general types of information that are needed at this level of geography.