

STATE OF ALABAMA

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

LABOR MARKET INFORMATION DIVISION

WORKFORCE INFORMATION GRANT REPORT PY 2020-2021

Program Year 2020-2021 provided the Alabama Labor Market Information (LMI) shop opportunities to excel in workforce development, internal reorganization, and learning to work remotely. COVID-19 provided major obstacles throughout the Program Year that dictated how deliverables were met.

The ongoing pandemic did not prevent the WIG team from training career center staff, the tedious development of support products for the Governor's Office of Education and Workforce Transformation (GOEWT), nor continued staff capacity building. The uncertainty and fear that has gripped the nation did not paralyze our commitment and dedication to producing the highest-quality information possible and carrying on with the daily responsibilities required of our office. We dug in and worked remotely for a period, as well as learned to communicate with colleagues and customers in exciting new ways and dealt with the unfolding Covid realities from a distance. Meetings became conference calls, and at least one seasoned citizen in our unit learned to fly with Zoom.

The previous WIG manager was transitioned out of the LMI Division before the end of PY 20 when a new office was created to house GOEWT activities, thereby removing the distraction from WIG-funded activities. The replacement WIG manager comes from Workforce Information Database administration of WIA and is working diligently to apply a fresh perspective and a lot of balm to required WIG tasks. Additional positive changes in administration came in the form of a new LMI director - Michele Tatum has accepted charge of the helm after the retirement of James Henry.

The program year has been extremely chaotic and stressful as the people who make up the successful Alabama WIG team have been concerned not just with personal health and family welfare, but changes within the work environment as leadership has changed. More difficult periods are inevitable, but right now we celebrate the team accomplishments of PY 20.

DELIVERABLES & ACTIVITIES

I) WORKFORCE INFORMATION DATABASE (WID)

The Workforce Information Database (WID) is current with version 2.8 and we have completely updated all occupations and license information within the WID file. LMI staff continues to participate in training opportunities, such as webinars and conference calls, to stay updated on any additional information that needs to be added to the database and any necessary changes made to the WID system.

II) INDUSTRY & OCCUPATIONAL EMPLOYMENT PROJECTIONS

Statewide and regional projections are created and analyzed simultaneously to ensure regional projections correlate with the state. Statewide and sub-state long-term industry and occupational projections are current with the 2018-2028 series. Sub-state long-term employment projections were published on the LMI website during February 2021.

The University of Alabama's Center for Business and Economic Research's (CBER) Economic Outlook conference for 2021 was cancelled due to COVID-19 restrictions. The Economic Outlook report was received by LMI staff electronically and used for various reports, including short-term projections. Statewide short-term industry and occupational projections for 2020-2022 were completed and submitted to the Projections Central website March 2, 2021.

Published statewide long-term and short-term projections can also be found at <https://www.projectionscentral.com>.

III) LMI TRAINING FOR SERVICE DELIVERY

With an ever-changing landscape due to the pandemic LMI Staff had to pivot from in-person training to utilizing web-based training platforms. With this realization, the LMI Staff began reaching out to educators, administrators, workforce boards, postsecondary schools, and other agencies to pursue new training opportunities. LMI representatives conducted a Microsoft Teams call to train the seven (7) Alabama CareerOneStop Area Managers. The meeting took place on February 12th and aimed to train area managers on the new demand occupation format, demand publications, and website revisions. As an offshoot to this first call, two subsequent meetings using Teams and Zoom—February 19th and 23rd—were held to educate Career Center Supervisors in Region 1 (8 career center managers and the area manager attended) and WIOA executives from Regions 1 and 2 (a total of 8 WIOA board members attended the second call). LMI representatives continue to stress the need to update all publications within the career centers to give accurate information to clients.

On April 2nd, 2021, an LMI representative presented to the Region 5 Educator Workforce Academy group. Twelve people attended via Zoom where the LMI website updates were showcased with the new Career Cluster Demand Occupations' posters, brochures, and summaries. This included a walkthrough of locating all publications on the LMI website and ended with the recap of the county profiles and highlighting the Alabama Commission on Higher Education data that details high school graduation performance, postsecondary graduates by degree, and enrollments by field of study.

On March 3, 2021, LMI representatives presented basic LMI and workforce development training to the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services. The presentation was made via Zoom with twelve (12) Rehab Benefits Counselors and their director in attendance. All aspects of LMI were covered during the two (2) hour call. A live demonstration of the LMI website and location of the following topics were discussed: OES interactive wage and employment; QCEW data and timelines for updates; LAUS page review to include the tabular PDF with conversation about preliminary and revised data, this year and last year comparison; LAUS and HWOL publication schedule; Tableau viz overview for claimants by county, demographics of UI claimants, interactive LAUS, and historical files that are available; Workforce Development page review covering the Alabama Employer Locator, demand occupations, county profiles, HWOL, and employment projections; Projections period and current timeline, 2018-2028 and when our next update will occur; Demand occupations partnership with ACCCP and the methodology for determining the demand occupations, expansion of list from the hot 40 occupations to over 200 occupations divided into career clusters; O*NET website was demonstrated and the Activities by Ability Report, CareerOneStop and the career videos, reemployment, veterans, and disability resources available. Lastly, training also covered MySkills MyFuture for the career changers.

The director for the Alabama Community College System Adult Education requested and received training on our publications via Zoom on February 26, 2021. This covered the three ACCS regions within the state and their subsequent adult education counselors. The new demand publications and county profiles were completely reviewed. Twenty attendees were on the call.

The East Alabama Works executive director invited the LMI unit to present the new demand occupation publications on the 2nd quarter regional workforce zoom call on April 23, 2021. An LMI representative presented and updated the workforce council on all new publications found on the LMI workforce development website. Also presented were the State of the Workforce Reports, County Profiles, and Help Wanted On-Line (HWOL). An estimated 100 attendees were on the call during the presentation.

Central Alabama Works Career Coach Appreciation Brunch on April 30, 2021 presented a virtual and in-person opportunity for LMI to present and receive feedback from the career coaches in the Central region. Discussions on the new publications were held detailing the changes and enhancements to the current publications that are available. Also discussed was our use of the median work key scores in our publications to assist in matching students with potential occupations. Of the 20 attendees, 6 attended via Zoom, at Trenholm State Community College. Attendees were provided print publications of all current products.

LMI presented at the Southeast AlabamaWorks Educator Workforce Academy meeting held on May 7, 2021 in Troy, AL, covering the new publications and demand occupations. There were 13 career coaches in attendance during the Educator Workforce Academy. LMI representatives discussed print versions of the career cluster posters, career cluster brochures, and the demand summaries as well as demonstrated where LMI resources can be found online, County profiles and the ACHE data available online.

Within LMI, Statisticians and Analysts continue to educate one another on features in Excel, Tableau, ArcMap, and other data processing and visualization software. This is part of a conscious effort to learn and refine best practices that create consistent, reproducible products.

IV) ANNUAL ECONOMIC ANALYSIS & OTHER REPORTS

The University of Alabama, Center for Business and Economic Research (CBER) works with ADOL/LMI to produce annual statewide and regional economic analysis reports. ADOL/LMI continues to work closely with CBER to provide them with essential data to provide recommendations to planners, policymakers, developers, and educators on how to move the economy in a positive direction. Using the labor market information data from ADOL, The Alabama State Data Center, and various other resources, reports are produced for the State of Alabama and each of the seven local WIOA boards in the state. LMI staff partner with CBER staff to present information from this report and new products from the LMI division to each of the local boards. Reports for the state and workforce regions are available under the Reports and Surveys section of the Workforce Development Link. The current release was published in November 2020. For the latest Alabama State of the Workforce Report: <http://www2.labor.alabama.gov/WorkforceDev/WorkforceReports/Alabama.pdf>.

The Help Wanted OnLine reports continue to provide context on the online job marketplace. Copies of this report for each region and statewide, as well as technical notes are available on the LMI website, under the HWOL header: <http://www2.labor.alabama.gov/WorkforceDev>. Each month, one occupation

is selected to spotlight. This occupation-specific spotlight includes the analysis of annual demand, fill time as it related to similar occupations, a list of the specialized and baseline skills, most requested certifications, market salary insights, and ad counts for the specific occupation over the last twelve months. With our continued partnership with Burning Glass, we have access to data and insights to assist our customers in making the most informed choices with regards to local economic policy. Since the beginning of the pandemic, LMI has been providing analysis of Burning Glass Job Ad Trends and UI claim data on a weekly basis. LMI provides this data to the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta and the Governor's Office of Education and Workforce Transformation (GOEWT) on a weekly basis. Currently, we are tracking the weekly changes to Sector and NAICS ad counts, previous year NAICS job ad counts, weekly claims by county and NAICS, weekly claims by industry sector, weekly claims by NAICS, and weekly claims by county.

The WIG unit continues to analyze both UI data and job ad data from Burning Glass as it supports weekly data requests from the Atlanta Federal Reserve Bank. This includes analysis of 4-digit NAICS initial and continued unemployment, as well as, job ad data for industry sector, 3-digit NAICS and 4-digit NAICS levels.

V) CUSTOMER CONSULTATIONS

Customer consultation in Alabama is continuously evaluated using employer groups, WIOA partner reviews, requests for publications, training events, and information received from customers. LMI staff continues to answer requests for information made by phone and email. LMI staff are reviewing options for continued presentations and training via the web for future updates. Of the requests received via phone, most involved technical assistance in locating a report or data on the LMI website.

During PY 2020, LMI staff continued attending various meetings throughout the state to gain a better understanding of the needs of industry and workforce development initiatives. Meetings and presentations have begun to occur in person more frequently in 2021, than 2020.

CONSORTIUM PARTICIPATION

- Monthly Governor's Office of Education and Workforce Transformation (GOEWT) Board Meetings
- Alabama Longitudinal Data System for Alabama Planning Team
- Alabama Committee on Credentialing and Career Pathways (ACCCP) Technical Advisory Committee Meeting
- Quarterly ACCCP Meetings

MEMBERSHIP ASSOCIATIONS & ORGANIZATIONS

- Extended membership to the LMI Institute partnered with C2ER

MEETINGS ATTENDED

- State Workforce Board Meetings (State & Regional)
- SLDS Grantee meetings
- GOEWT Liaison weekly meeting

- Alabama Committee on Credentials and Career Pathways (ACCCP) meetings
- ACCCP Technical Assistance Committees
- C2ER/LMI Institute Annual Conference
- Projections Managing Partnership (PMP) Virtual Summit
- Uneven Outcomes in the Labor Market Virtual Conference
- AlabamaWorks CLIFF Webinar
- AlabamaWorks Talent Development Convening
- WDQI meeting with project officer
- National Skills Coalition, Workforce Data National Advisory Panel
- ACCCP Quarterly Meetings
- Combined Workforce Meeting Alabama Workforce Council (AWC) and State WIOA Board
- WDQI Monitoring Review
- Coleridge DOL/ETA Applied Data Analytics
- WDQI Review Exit Meeting
- Presentation for the annual SLDS Best Practices Conference
- Attend SLDS Best Practices Conference
- Alabama Talent Development Capstone Course presentation
- Combined Workforce Meeting Alabama Workforce Council (AWC) and State WIOA Board
- ATLAS Data Sharing Agreement Meeting with partners
- Area Managers Meeting – LMI updates
- WDQI Grant Closeout Meeting
- First ATLAS P-20W Council Meeting
- ATLAS meeting with AL Dept of Early Childhood Education (ADECE)
- HWOL/Burning Glass Meeting about data for Research Project conducted by Atlanta Federal Reserve Bank
- ATLAS P-20W Council Meeting
- AlabamaWorks! Monthly Webinar Series Presentation
- GSEC Survey meeting with Alabama Supercomputer Authority
- SLDS Virtual Site Visit from US Dept of Education, SLDS support team

MEETINGS LMI MADE PRESENTATIONS

- AlabamaWorks Talent Development Convening – Virtual
- Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services
- Alabama Community College System Central Region Zoom call
- ACCS Southern Region Adult Ed Directors
- East AlabamaWorks! Quarterly Workforce Call
- Central AlabamaWorks! Career Coach Meeting
- Southeast AlabamaWorks Educator Workforce Academy in-person meeting
- West AlabamaWorks! Executive Virtual Meeting
- AlabamaWorks Talent Development Convening

MEETINGS LMI DISPLAYED & OFFERED INFORMATION AT AN EXHIBIT

- Unfortunately, due to the pandemic, all statewide ADOL sponsored career fairs and job fairs were suspended. LMI continues to offer its services for such future events.

ALABAMA LMI WEBSITE DEMAND

Website hits, by category, for the LMI website at www.labor.alabama.gov/lmi July 2020 - June 2021:

- Accelerate Alabama Industry Cluster Reports, 8,048
- ACCCP High Demand Lists & Summary Tables, 1,075
- Alabama Employer Locator, 958
- Alabama Green Report, 145
- Alabama Underemployment Forecast, 562
- Alabama Underemployment Report, 812
- Career Cluster Brochures, 3,538
- Career Cluster Posters, 1,623
- Career Exploration Guide (PDF and Online), 8,127
- Career Videos, 43,451
- Certifications & Licensing Report, 237
- County Profile Reports, 8,002
- Health Care Industry Cluster Report, 1,068
- Help Wanted Online (HWOL) Monthly Reports, 1,279
- High-Tech in Alabama, 319
- Licensed Occupations Guide, 6,276
- LMI Newsletter 14,421
- LMI Users Guide, 763
- Older Worker Report, 402
- Projections, 4,922
- State of the Workforce Reports, 8,801
- Statewide and Regional Reports, 6,457
- Website Guide, 1,121

PRODUCT USAGE/RESOURCE REQUESTS

- Career Cluster Brochures, 17,700
- Career Cluster Posters, 13,920
- High Demand List & Summary Tables, 5,171
- Career Exploration Guide, 20
- Career Website Guide, 6,567
- Industry Employment Projections Book, 70
- Licensed Occupation Guide, 15
- My Next Move Desk Aid, 1,457
- O*NET Online Desk Aid, 1,910
- Occupational Employment Projections Book – Long-Term, 20
- Workforce Development Regions Map, 3
- Metropolitan Statistical Area Map, 3

CUSTOMER QUOTES & ACCOLADES

Sabrina Wood, Central AlabamaWorks:

Thank you for your presentation at our Educator Workforce Academy! We have had so much positive feedback. We are hosting an Appreciation Brunch for our Career Coaches on April 29th at Trenholm in Montgomery. Career Coaches are our “boots on the ground” in the schools and help us get information and content to the teachers/students. They will definitely benefit from your resources!

Eddie Martin, AIDT:

Excellent (data) - this is exactly what I was needing. Thank you both!

Donna Bowden, Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services:

Thank you both for arranging and completing the training with my staff today. I have already received many messages, emails and text expressing their appreciation for the time and quality of training.

I believe they will find the information and site resources extremely useful as they provide services to the individuals with disabilities they serve.

Mr. Nix was thorough, flexible, entertained all of our questions and provided a clear and guided approach to the LMI website. Gerald did a wonderful job guiding my staff through the various components. I do believe it is a site that many of them will visit again and use on a regular basis.

Pam Clay, DeKalb Economic Development Authority:

I sincerely appreciate your assistance!
You all are a wonderful resource for us!

VI) ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN TO MEET CUSTOMER NEEDS

The LMI staff continuously looks for new ways to highlight and demonstrate the value of the products our group produces. Using personal interaction with data users to better provide relevant products has been a very effective way to present our publications. LMI staff members continue to attend quarterly meetings—virtual and in-person—to represent LMI in all seven regions across the state. Attending the Alabama Regional Workforce Council meetings allows staff better insight into what information state agencies may need, as well as local industry through the employer representatives present. Most data requests are fulfilled by directing users to various reports available on the website. Others, mainly economic developers, require unique sets of data that are compiled by staff. The most frequent requests are updates to the most current data available. LMI staff makes it a priority to update reports whenever the newest respective data is released.

Alabama continues its partnership with the Census Bureau’s Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD). LEHD provides valuable data, through the Unemployment Insurance program, such as

commuting patterns, workforce demographics, and employment trends. Commuting pattern reports were updated with 2018 information and will be updated further as new data is released.

Help Wanted OnLine (HWOL) reports allow the division to show real-time employers that are potentially hiring within the state and regions. At a local level, such as the county level, customers can recognize employers posting job ads. HWOL reports are updated monthly for Alabama and the seven workforce regions.

LMI's regular products are updated and published as soon as new data becomes available. Once updated, those products are uploaded to LMI's website. Career centers are notified whenever these updates occur, and can then order the new materials, including materials specific to their region, through an internal system. Customers, such as educators, can also contact the LMI office with requests for these materials. These education customers, such as counselors, career tech coaches, and teachers, make up most outside requestors. With the upcoming release of new publications and the hurdles the pandemic brings, LMI is exploring new ways of delivering training and presentation avenues. In this time of economic upheaval, finding new ways to deliver updates on our products becomes more important than ever before.

VII) NEW TOOLS & RESOURCES

WIG staff continues exploring new ways of displaying data using Tableau, attending trainings and seminars. The use of Tableau to create visualizations not only allows users to interact with the data view but also allows for the download of the corresponding data as well. Using this software, information can be updated in a more timely and efficient manner while also displaying information in new and creative ways. LMI staff is in the process of gathering data from Burning Glass, LEHD, and other resources, to create a cohesive data experience for all data user types.

In response to the pandemic, new Tableau visualizations placed on our website last year have persisted: Demographics of Unemployment Insurance Claims

(<http://www2.labor.alabama.gov/Laus/ClaimsDemogTab.aspx>), Benefits and Claims Paid

(<http://www2.labor.alabama.gov/Laus/InitialClaimsPaidTab.aspx>), Claims by County

(<http://www2.labor.alabama.gov/laus/InitialClaimsTab.aspx>), and Claims by Industry

(<http://www2.labor.alabama.gov/laus/InitialClaimsbyindustryTab.aspx>).

In response to Governor Ivey's Strategic Plan for Education and Workforce Development, LMI has worked with the GOEWT diligently to develop skills and competency-based job descriptions to reflect the help Alabama's employers find skilled workers. LMI continues to evaluate current license data as well as researching the addition of new licensing occupational information for the Licensed Occupation Guide.

We have expanded our list of licensed occupations to 149 unique licensed occupations. We have cross-referenced these occupations with projections in developing publications that educate and inform on the growing list. All licensing data has been collected from and confirmed by the controlling board.

VIII) EFFORTS TO CREATE & SUPPORT PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATIONS

LMI works closely with the State of Alabama’s Governor’s Office of Education and Workforce Transformation (GOEWT) via the Office of Education and Workforce Statistics (OEWS), and the Alabama Committee on Credentialing and Career Pathways (ACCCP) to facilitate the growth of Alabama’s workforce, aid in the transition between education and the workforce, and create opportunities for workers in the state of Alabama. LMI continues to offer resources and data to the ACCCP to further its work defining High Demand Occupations.

Last year, LMI created competency models to reflect the knowledge, skills, and abilities of each of the High Demand Occupations, beginning with competencies for every occupation that cover personal effectiveness, academic competencies, and workplace competencies. Specific to the division of occupations into groups by the Career Cluster system, occupations in each cluster share competencies initially deemed Ready to Work Plus—now titled “Mobilizing Alabama’s Pathways”—as well as Management competencies. In the groupings within the career clusters, technical competencies are defined with consideration of the work and education qualifications shared in each pathway. TACs, with years of experience in education and industry, evaluated these models and offered feedback, fine-tuning these models to accurately reflect the Alabama workforce. The ACCCP will use these models to create training programs for prospective workers and to better understand the workforce in Alabama. This year, LMI provided 31 competency models to detail occupations on this year’s demand list. As of the end of August, subcommittees of the ACCCP have reviewed and approved the new models.

As a complement to the Competency Model project, LMI created a system to facilitate the definition of pathways through occupations that a hypothetical worker might take from entry-level to destination occupation. The office of Education and Workforce Statistics (OEWS) and the ACCCP have taken over the responsibility of maintaining these pathways as of mid-2021.

The WIG staff continues to participate in local workforce board and council meetings by providing information, presenting data, or providing other resources.

The WIG unit has a standing relationship with the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) Career Technical Education and Career Coaches. Many products provided by LMI are a result of this relationship. LMI staff present at their annual summer conference and attend several job/career fairs held throughout the state. The summer conference for this program year was skipped due to COVID.

LMI staff also partner closely with career centers. Providing LMI training to career centers has not only strengthened their knowledge of LMI resources, but also what resources are most important. LMI staff continue to ensure that career centers are notified when new information (brochures, posters, etc.) is available so they can provide these to customers. The WIG staff communicates with the area managers to discuss any observations and to ensure their informational needs are being met. Area managers contact LMI from time to time for clarification on data points.

LMI also has a longstanding relationship with the University of Alabama’s Center for Business and Economic Research (CBER) used to collaborate on grants and workforce reports. LMI’s collaboration allows the WIG unit first rights to publish the data and to develop additional reports with the survey results.

IX) ACTIVITIES TO LEVERAGE WLMI FUNDING

The Center for Business and Economic Research, in partnership with the LMI office, produces an annual economic analysis report to meeting the grant requirement. This report includes a survey, conducted by the Institute of Social Science Research (ISSR) at the University of Alabama, on underemployment throughout the state and regions. In 2018, CBER received regular funding from the Legislature to conduct workforce development research, which relieved LMI from using WIG funds for the report. LMI staff continue to work closely with CBER to develop vacancy/skills/benefits surveys to provide information to workforce boards. This partnership allows LMI staff access to data from the surveys, with permission to publish various reports with the data.

WIG staff continues to save funds by facilitating a method for career centers to order products (posters, brochures, etc.) using their funds. LMI still funds materials requested by other customers. To reduce shipping costs to these customers, materials are sent, where possible, to the closest career center for the customer to pick up. This also helps raise awareness in career centers. By including revision dates within each product and by keeping materials updated on the website, customers can download and print them for use, ensuring they have access to the latest data available. In the coming service year, LMI plans to make materials more accessible by offering single reports and tables. Previously, products like the Fast-Growing List were only available bundled with the Full Demand List and Summary Tables.

X) RECOMMENDATIONS TO ETA FOR CHANGES & IMPROVEMENTS TO FUTURE WIGS REQUIREMENTS

At this time, LMI has no recommendations for changes or improvements to WIGS requirements.

XI) EFFORTS TO CONTINUE SERVICE OPERATIONS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

LMI continued to provide its publications and training meetings during COVID-19. For a complete list of training presentations given over Zoom, please refer to section 3 of this report.