

Virginia

Workforce Information Grant, Program Year 2020 (2020-2021)

PROGRESS REPORT

1. Workforce Information Database (WID)

i. Description

In Program Year 2020, we continued to update the core tables with new data in the prescribed WID 2.8 formatting. Our previous Database Architect, Robert Bean, retired in October. In February a new DBA, Karen Smith was hired and an additional DBA, Fereydoon Hamidi, was hired in late September to manage the technical aspects of the WID database maintenance. The LMI Consortium changed from a Domain Name System (DNS) platform to Cascade, which is a Content Management System (CMS) platform in July. Due to the change, the previously utilized data file type had to be altered to be compatible for data uploads onto our website. We are also preparing for a new Unemployment Benefits system to be implemented in October. We continue to strive to streamline our processes that make the WID data available to the public through new or improved products.

We continue to update core and administrative tables with available data or as needed for users of the data on our site. The monthly updates included:

- Current Employment Statistics (CES)
- Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LABFORCE)
- Consumer Price Index
- UI Claims and Benefits

Other WID updates included:

- Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (industry -quarterly and annually)
- Short and Long Term Projections (IOMATRIX)
- Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics (IOWAGE-Annual OEWS)
- License and License Authority (LICENSE and LICAUTH)
- Data Axle (formerly InfoGroup) semi-annually
- SOC and NAICS code updates (OCCCODES,INDCODES)
- Geographic table updates (GEOG)

ii. Customer Consultation

One of the main things we have encountered since the beginning of the pandemic is an increase in inquiries that we have received from people that had never previously used WID

data. It is our goal to make our products and data easily accessible and digestible to a broad audience. Presenting the data in multiple ways has been one of the ways that we are striving to do this. We have tried to use more interactive and visual representations of the data to go along with analysis. There is a wealth of data within the WID and we continue to utilize that to assist our partners and constituents into making informed decisions.

We collaborated with our partner states in the LMI Consortium for the migration to Cascade in order to make the transition as smooth as possible. In order to leverage our resources better, there is now a catalogue of already designed products that has been compiled from unique features a member state may have on their site so that it can be easily adapted for their own data. We look forward to using this to expand our offerings in the future.

Our LMI shop also continued to assist the Governor's Workforce Board with maintaining and refining their strategic workforce dashboard that includes elements of the WID with data from other state agencies into one place for easy dissemination (<https://viriniacareerworks.com/dashboards/>).

iii. Customer Needs

The WID database is one of the main building blocks of our LMI shop. The data allows us to provide workforce offices, partner organizations, legislators, and constituents with the resources that they need to make data-based decisions. As we get questions from interested parties we strive to take that opportunity to make sure that they have the tools to access and use the data properly. The inquiries we receive drive what products we develop to meet their needs. The WID data allows our in-house economists to analyze the state of Virginia's workforce, economic trends, and develop publications based on their insight. The advantage of having all states using a common format and collection method allows us to compare Virginia across a host of states or against the nation as a whole.

iv. Collaboration and Funding Support

In addition to being a member of the LMInformer Consortium, Virginia has been involved with the Analyst Resource Center (ARC) for three years. We are involved in the committees at large. We have had staff attend the regular meetings of the ARC and participate in the subcommittee meetings they hold during their weekly conferences and we look forward that to continuing our involvement once travel restrictions are lifted. One of our IT staff serves on the structure subcommittee. Our participation also included providing the ARC with updates to the Occupational Licensing data.

We have been an active member in the activities of the National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA). Our LMI Director continues to serve on a panel in regards to LMI and how it can benefit our Workforce Services Division. He has attended and participated in the LMI Committee Meetings and we plan to have a continued presence in future meetings and conferences.

Virginia is also an active member of the Local Employment Household Dynamics (LEHD) partnership. Our LMI Director served on the LEHD Steering Committee this past year.

2. Industry and Occupational Employment Projections

i. Description

This was the first time that our new Senior Economist completed the sub-state area long-term projections. He continues to refine the model that is being used and to assess other characteristics to make our projections more robust to model the Virginia economy.

- **Long-Term Projections:** Virginia completed the 2018-2028 industry and occupational employment projections for the Workforce Development Areas (WDAs). The projections were produced using the methodology, software, tools, and guidelines developed by the Projections Consortium. As required, Virginia populated the WID and submitted the sub-state long-term data for public dissemination.
- **Short-Term Projections:** Virginia produced the state-level, short-term industry and occupational projections for the 2020 to 2022 period. As with the long-term projections, Virginia used the methodology, software, tools, and guidelines developed by the Projections Consortium. Virginia populated the WID and submitted the short-term data for public dissemination.

ii. Customer Consultation

Projections continue to be one of the most popular products that our LMI shop produces. Many of our state agency and economic development partners utilize this product. This year we assisted the newly formed Virginia Office of Education Economics (VOEE) with the state mandated High Demand Occupation list that used the projections as one of the main inputs in their methodology. This relationship provided the LMI division the opportunity to see how the projections were being used. This partnership will continue as the methodology is currently undergoing a review by the Governor's Workforce Board before being finalized.

iii. Customer Needs

Since COVID began a majority of our work has dealt with the immediate timeframe. As the economy started to reopen with the vaccine rollout and economic recovery, attention has once again returned to the workforce pipeline. Workforce, economic developers, and educational groups are focusing their efforts on what the future needs are going to look like and how they have shifted in the last two years. The Economic Information & Analytics team has provided guidance on questions pertaining to how they might use projections data to analyze what related industries or occupations out of work constituents might find gainful employment within. The Workforce Connection Dashboard displays the workforce area projection for each industry of the job posting for job seekers to view what is in demand and what careers are on the decline in their area.

iv. Collaboration and Funding Support

During the program year we had four staff members attend the recent Projections Management Partnership Conference. The additional insight that this conference provides expands the breadth of knowledge that we have on the process of producing the best projections and refining the model. By having more people attend this conference, in-depth conversations and brainstorming can occur at a more detailed level than those who just have a cursory understanding of the process.

Virginia continues to support the National Governors Association's (NGA) Policy Academy to enhance and promote partnerships across the workforce spectrum. The focus of the Academy is to better prepare Americans to work in the new economy through improved postsecondary education and workforce training aligned to the needs of employers and evolving state economies. Our LMI unit is working with the Virginia Community College System, the Council for Virginia's Future, and the Virginia Board for Workforce Development to achieve those goals.

3. LMI training for service delivery

i. Description

This year as we continued to work primarily from home we had to be more creative with how we reached out and interacted with our audience. While in-person interaction was limited, we used technology to ensure that our LMI shop was used as the valuable resource it is and that the knowledge and data our team has was used across various entities. Our team served as the main source of disseminating information from our agency and connecting claims and demographic data to the overall Virginia workforce data that is produced.

One of the big advantages of switching to an online format is that we were able to reach a wider audience at once. In July, our Chief Labor Market Strategist provided an overview of our LMI website and what data and resources our LMI shop has available to all of the Workforce Center locations. After that presentation there has been a lot more interaction and engagement with our one stop centers directly. We also redesigned our Career Search option on our homepage and our Workforce staff served as testers to ensure that it met their needs in the field.

Virginia also sent a team to participate in the virtual ETA class Applied Data Analytics Class. The class taught our team how to approach and analyze data in new ways and how they might apply computer learning technology in order to increase efficiency in day-to-day work as well as on large scale projects. It was an opportunity to meet analysts in similar positions from all over the country.

Our staff also regularly interacts and supports our workforce partners through their participation and attendance at job fairs, seminars, conferences, and various meetings. Our graphic designer produced a multitude of flyers for online job fairs that the VEC has been conducting.

The Director and Chief LMI Strategist also serve as staff for the Governor's Virginia Board of Workforce Development which has at-large and committee meetings as well as employer advisory council meetings. Consultation with our workforce partners is on an on-going basis throughout the year. We discuss labor market information, special data sets, new products, improved delivery systems, and what products are needed. We strive to continuously improve upon our products in response to suggestions from workforce partners or availability of new systems.

We are in the planning stage of holding a conference with the Federal Reserve next spring in which we will talk about how COVID has affected Virginia's workforce and other topics of interest. The VEC annually renews its Memorandum of Understanding with VCCS to update and provide LMI offerings on an ongoing basis.

In the past year, our staff has participated in the following activities relating to LMI data and information dissemination:

- LMI Institute Board of Directors
- Governor's Workforce Board Committee: Performance
- Governor's Workforce Board Committee: Access & Equity
- Governor's Workforce Board Committee: Domestic Service Workers
- LEHD Leadership Conferences
- NASWA Steering Committee
- NASWA National Labor Market Exchange Workgroup Meetings
- Virginia Longitudinal Data System Research Group
- Virginia Longitudinal Data System: Connecting to an Equitable Future
- ETA: Applied Data Analytics Training Class
- R Programming Training- 1st session for 2 employees, 2nd session for 4
- LMI Consortium Meetings
- Economic Information & Analytics Overview
- Foodbank area data requests
- Tableau Data Training
- VEC Employer Conferences
- VCCS Workforce Conferences
- Projections Management Partnership Conference

ii. Customer Consultation

The continued pandemic and the effects it is having on Virginia's economy have been the topic for all of our customers this year. In response to requests for information about the

ever shifting economy, our LMI shop continued to produce three products that get updated weekly. Every Thursday we publish a weekly Press Release that describes how the Commonwealth ranks against the nation, what the unemployment claims numbers are for Virginia, as well as a visual representation of where those claims are occurring throughout the state. We also produce a demographics report that shows the breakdown of claims by different cohorts such as race, education level, and gender. This data was repeatedly requested by our workforce partners, politicians, and non-profit or special interest groups to target those populations have been affected by the pandemic. Another aspect of this weekly publication is a excel workbook that has relevant data concerning the unemployment claims and collateral data broken into different subsections. It includes different aspects like claims by workforce area, claims by SOC code, as well as by industry.

iii. **Customer Needs**

Virginia LMI staff delivered assistance to VEC Workforce Services staff, One-Stop Center staff, and local workforce development boards and continues to provide additional information upon request. Workforce boards have received additional data support from our team for initiatives that they are implementing to combat workforce problems resulting from the ongoing pandemic. As the end of Federal programs ended at the beginning of September, a request from the Department of Social Services, the Department of Housing and Development, and workforce board leaders across the Commonwealth was prepared on who was soon going to be without that additional support. This allowed them to target their services to the most at-risk populations. Staff has continued to disseminate information to a wide range of Virginia citizens and media requests. .

iv. **Collaboration and Funding Support**

Our LMI Director serves on the Labor Market Information Institute Board of Directors as the Vice Chair. It had allowed us to voice our opinions to C2ER on what resources and publications we believe would be most beneficial. The board oversees the actions of the LMI Institute and serves to provide insight into the trends and data needs and best practices for intermediary agencies like state LMI agencies.

The Labor Market Information staff works with Virginia Community College System (VCCS) staff, VEC Workforce Services staff, Virginia Board of Workforce Development, Governor's office staff, county governments, and local workforce development boards to identify and provide needed LMI information and support for strategic planning, responding to federal, state, and local initiatives. The staff continues to provide information upon request.

The VEC is a participant in the Virginia Longitudinal Data System (VLDS) along with eight other data-oriented state agencies, and the LMI Director sits on the research committee and on the Governance Committee of VLDS. Cross-agency data is used to conduct targeted research. The U.S. Department of Education grant has created solid partnerships, resource sharing, and collaborative research across state workforce and education agencies and university partners. Collaborative funding is an important aspect of this effort. This year

staff participated in the research group that was tasked with developing a state plan to increase equity in the workforce.

The VEC's EIA Division continues to provide support the Workforce Development Plan for Virginia. In January 2014, Virginia's Governor required workforce agencies (24 in Virginia) to produce a Workforce Development Plan for Virginia. Further, he issued Executive Order 23 requiring the completion of nine action items by the public workforce system. The actions support the following goal: "identify, increase, and accelerate the availability of a workforce ready to fill middle-skill jobs to sustain and attract businesses and ensure economic growth by driving workforce credentials that matter to jobs attainment." The VEC continues to be heavily involved in several of these action items and significant progress has been made.

4. Annual Economic Analysis and Other Reports

i. Description

Our goal was to publish informative and relevant materials that make our labor market information easy to access and understand. We streamlined many of our products for ease of use as well as aesthetic purposes. We have made our website easier to navigate so that it could be leveraged easily for workforce services entities. We strive to include Workforce Services components in our reports and products. All of our labor market and career publications can be found under the Publications tab of the webpage.

- The ***Program Year 2020-2021 Statewide Economic Analysis Report (S.E.A.)*** is an annual publication that seeks to support the agencies and employers working with the VEC across the state. The report analyzes recent trends in myriad economic indicators, including GDP, population, labor force demographics, and data surrounding industry and occupational projections. The report provides information on industry, the labor force, and the relationship between labor supply and demand at both the state and local workforce development areas.
(VirginiaWorks.com-Publications)
- The ***Virginia Employment Indicators***, (formerly Virginia Economic Indicators) is a quarterly publication with an analysis of the U.S. economy as well as an analysis of the state and metropolitan areas. Key economic indicators including employment, unemployment, production workers' hours and earnings, and other significant business related data series are illustrated and analyzed. The Governor, Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs), and other workforce associates use the economic analyses in this publication to form policy and workforce decisions. Further enhancements were adopted in PY 2016 that reduces the production time, thus making the publication timelier. In PY 2019 we updated the report further to make it more appealing to a wider audience and make it easily digestible.
(VirginiaWorks.com-Publications)

- ***Structural Unemployment: A new measurement and Continuing Discussion of an Elusive Economic Indicator*** is an article written that proposes a new methodology to measure structural unemployment. Oftentimes issues that are known like skill gaps are not captured in current measures on unemployment. The new method could in turn be used to assess the implementation of programs implemented under WIOA and the Trade Act.
(VirginiaWorks.com-Publications)

New and Enhanced Reports and Products on the Internet (VirginiaWorks.com)

- ***Weekly Unemployment Claims Press Release*** produced weekly, provides an overview of weekly unemployment claims by for the state as well as each county and Workforce Development Area for the most current reporting week. Includes maps showing week-over-week changes and claims by locality. An additional workbook is available for download containing claims by industry and occupation by WDA.
(Vec.virginia.gov/UI-press-release)
- ***Weekly demographic report of claimants*** produced weekly, provides an overview of weekly unemployment claims by various demographic variables.
(Vec.virginia.gov/UI-press-release)
- ***Demographics Dashboard*** produced weekly, provides an overview of weekly unemployment claims by various demographic variables, counties, and LWDA's in an interactive visual form.
(Vec.virginia.gov/UI-claims-dashboard)
- ***VirginiaWorks.com*** was launched early in 2019. The goal was to make our labor market information more accessible and have data organized in a streamlined and meaningful way. In PY 2019 we updated the QCEW, LAUS, CES, and OES dashboards to allow for data to be downloaded based on the selections made. The QCEW dashboard was completely replaced, so data back to 1990 is available rather than the most recent quarter.
- ***2020 Labor Force Participation Rates by Counties and Cities*** produced annually, provides the Labor Force participation rates from CY 2012 to 2020 for each county and City in Virginia.
(VirginiaWorks.com/labor-force-participation-rates)
- ***Unemployment Rates and Employment Data by Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA)*** provides maps and data for each of the 15 Local Workforce Development Areas. LWDA and State averages on the map are consistent with the census tract five-year

averages and the excel tables provide labor force, employment, and unemployment statistics for each LWDA's census tracts.

(VirginiaWorks.com/local-workforce-development-areas-lwda)

- The ***Labor Market Information Publications Catalog*** provides a brief synopsis of each of our leading publications to aid our constituents in finding the right publication for their needs.
(VirginiaWorks.com-Publications)
- The ***Understanding Alternative Measures of Labor Underutilization*** (formerly the Labor Supply and Demand in Virginia) is a quarterly report on the subtleties of unemployment. Drawing primarily from the six alternative measures of labor underutilization, or "U's," from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the report addresses trends in the unemployment rate, as well as less discussed concepts such as underemployment and job-seeker discouragement. The aim of this publication is to provide readers with a deeper understanding of the complex relationship between the supply and demand of labor, and the interconnections with the economy at large.
(VirginiaWorks.com-Publications)
- ***Job Searching Tips – 5 Steps to a Successful Job Search*** is a brochure that provides useful tips for each of the five steps of a successful job search: searching for job openings; tips for resumes; applying online and in-person; interviewing; and follow-up.
(VirginiaWorks.com-Publications)
- ***Virginia Occupation Career Resource Guide***, assists students and any other persons who are looking for information to aid them in researching and finding new careers. Information is provided on a variety of career choices, how to plan for a career, education needed to qualify for various jobs, how to apply and interview for jobs, and much more.
(VirginiaWorks.com-Publications)
- The ***Top Five Virginia Industry Profiles and Top Five Virginia Industry Fact Sheets*** are companion publications, which provide information on the top industries in Virginia. The fact sheets offer a quick, at-a-glance look at the top five industries.
(VirginiaWorks.com-Publications)
- The ***Virginia Labor Force Metrics at a Glance*** is a monthly publication we began producing in October, 2015 that provides a snapshot of the most recent unemployment rate for Virginia and the U.S. as well as a historical graphic representation of Virginia's unemployment rate, labor force, labor force participation rate, employment and unemployment. In addition, a historical graphic representation of Virginia's initial

claims, continued claims, average duration, and exhaustion rate along with bullet points for each is also shown.

(VirginiaWorks.com-Publications)

- **Career Search** is a toolbar that allows users to explore occupations in depth. Once an occupation is selected, data from O'NET and CareerOneStop is gathered to show detailed information in regards to the occupation including necessary training, estimated wages, related occupations, as well as allowing the user to search for job postings in their selected area.
(VirginiaWorks.com-Homepage)
- **Career Quarterly Newsletter (formerly Career & Labor Market News)** was revised to better provide articles about occupational activity in Virginia, career planning, and job seeker advice.
(VirginiaWorks.com-Publications)
- **What Do I Want to Do When I Grow Up?** is designed to help young students (Grades 1-3) get a very basic understanding of occupations and careers by correlating their interests with various occupations.
(VirginiaWorks.com-Publications)
- **Exploring Your Career Options: Career Guide Handouts** is made up of six Career Guide Handouts designed to help students discover their career interests by learning about career clusters, different careers inside those career clusters, education and skills needed, and how to further research a career they might be interested in pursuing. These Handouts were redesigned in PY 2018 and are geared for students in grades 5 - 8. This replaces the former **Exploring Your Future! A Guide to Career Possibilities**.
(VirginiaWorks.com-Publications)
- The **Community Profiles** are available for all Virginia area types (the state; 11 MSAs; 15 WIAs; Congressional Districts; 133 counties and cities; 23 Virginia Community College Regions; and 21 Planning Regions). The *Profiles* contain economic and demographic data in text and graphic formats. The information is updated automatically when new data is available.
(VirginiaWorks.com-Community Profiles)
 - Demographic Profile: population by age, race/ethnicity and gender; population change; population projections by age and gender and by race/ethnicity; English language skills, commuting patterns
 - Economic Profile: unemployment rates; characteristics of the insured unemployed; unemployment insurance payments; employment by size of establishment; employers by size of establishment; 50 largest employers; employment by industry;

new startup firms; new hires by industry; turnover by industry; average weekly wage by industry; age of workers by industry; long-term and short-term industry employment projections; long-term and short-term occupational employment projections; growth occupations; declining occupations; consumer price index; local option sales tax

- Education Profile: educational attainment by age, gender, and race/ethnicity; graduate data trends; training providers

- The **Pocket Résumé** is a publication that can be filled out online, printed and folded to fit in a wallet or pocket to be used when going on job searches and interviews. One side of the résumé has tips for going on interviews, and the other side has places to put personal information.
(VirginiaWorks.com - Publications)

- The **Virginia Job Outlook** brochure lists job growth and wages for high growth occupations by education levels: bachelor's degree or higher; associate's degree, technical training, or work experience; and at least moderate on-the-job training, as well as occupations that are declining projected to 2028.
(VirginiaWorks.com - Publications)

- **Summary Analysis of Virginia 2018 and 2017 Benchmark Revisions of Nonagricultural Employment and Unemployment** analyzed the benchmark revisions of employment by industry for the state and metropolitan statistical areas as well as the revisions to unemployment.
(VirginiaWorks.com - Publications)

- **Top Fifty Employers** for each county, city, MSA, Planning Region, Virginia Community College Region and WIA and the state of Virginia are available on our website. One of the most frequently requested LMI products. Data is updated quarterly using the QCEW data as it is released.
(VirginiaWorks.com – Download Center)

- The **STEM Flyer** provides labor market information in the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics. The brochure shows the largest STEM occupations by education along with employment and wage data as well as the top high growth STEM occupations.
(VirginiaWorks.com - Publications)

- The **Employment and Wages by Industry and Area** shows employment and wages by industry and by area for the following areas: United States, Virginia, MSAs, and

Micropolitan Statistical Areas. This product is updated as the QCEW data becomes available quarterly. Historical data can also be found in the Download Center.
(VirginiaWorks.com - QCEW)

- **Current Local Area Unemployment Statistics** shows labor force, unemployment, as well as rates at the state, 13 Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs), 15 WIAs, 21 Planning Regions (PDCs), 23 Virginia Community College Regions, and 4 state regions is available on our website in Tableau form as well as in our Download Center.
(VirginiaWorks.com-LAUS)
- **Long-term Industry and Occupational Employment Projections** for the state, LWDA's and U.S. are available in electronic format on Virginia Workforce Connection as well as on VirginiaWorks.com-Employment. Data on the average annual number of job openings by occupation due to growth and separation is available, as well as estimated and projected employment. High-growth industries and occupations by area are also available. Historical data can be found in our Download Center.
(VirginiaWorks.com-Industry/Occupational Projections)
- **Short-term Industry and Occupational Employment Projections** for the state are available in electronic format on Virginia Workforce Connection as well as on VirginiaWorks.com-Employment. Estimated employment, projected employment, and annual average openings due to growth and replacements by occupation are displayed. High-growth industries and occupations by area are also available. Historical data can be found in our Download Center.
(VirginiaWorks.com- Industry/Occupational Projections)
- **Current Employment Statistics** shows employment of people on non-farm establishment's payrolls for both Virginia and Metropolitan Areas. Data is updated monthly. Also available in the download center.
(VirginiaWorks.com-CES)
- **Occupational Employment Wage Data** for the state, 13 Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs), 15 WIAs, 21 Planning Regions (PDCs), 23 Virginia Community College Regions, and 4 state regions is available on our website in Tableau form as well as in our Download Center. Entry level, mean, median, and experienced wage data by occupation is presented as well as employment data.
(VirginiaWorks.com-OES)
- Virginia continues to be a member of the **Local Employment Household Dynamics (LEHD)** partnership. We currently include LED data in several of our publications. Links are available on our website. LED data is now the source for commuting pattern data. The VEC regularly attends the national meeting.
(VirginiaWorks.com-Other Resources)

- **Data Axle Data** is now available via an interactive map that can be drilled-down to a specific region for the state, 13 Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs), 15 WIAs, 21 Planning Regions (PDCs), 23 Virginia Community College Regions, is available on our website in Tableau form.
(VirginiaWorks.com-Homepage)
- **UI Duration and Exhaustion Rates** data is available in the download center, and provides UI duration and exhaustion rates that can be found by locality.
(VirginiaWorks.com – Download Center)
- **Social Media** – We continue to enhance our existing Twitter page and LMI Facebook page that we regularly update.

ii. **Customer Consultation**

As requests for information are received by the Economic Information and Analytics (EIA) staff continually responds to requests for labor market information. Personnel also provide technical support to WIBs, economic developers, planners, economists, public and private sector agencies and businesses, and private citizens. We constantly receive feedback from those who utilize our data products. If we begin to see a pattern of requests for certain information we will send out a notice to WIBs and One-Stop centers if there is a product that we have that already meets the needs, or we will begin to develop a new publication that we can point users to in the future.

iii. **Customer Needs**

After the switch to the new Cascade website, some of the functionality was altered in the new environment. We are continuing to reconfigure to make it user friendly and easy to navigate. One of the major undertakings we are planning to do in the upcoming year is to reconfigure the Community Profiles so they are more modern and easier to both update and customize.

In an organizational move that occurred last program year, workforce services and our division, EIA are now under the same Deputy Commissioner. This has increased the interaction with the workforce services team members. Often in team meetings we now hear firsthand what WIBs, one-stop centers, and other programs are working on. It allows us to better support their efforts or see where a need may occur for an additional resource.

We have also utilized social media to alert users of data updates or new publications.

iv. **Collaboration and Funding Support**

Our LMI shop works with the Virginia Board of Workforce Development to serve as data experts on two committees for members. We also work with various groups, both state and national, on veteran employment issues.

The LMInformer Consortium catalog that has been developed allows us to expand our offerings on our website with minimal IT support. Recently added to the catalog was the Career Search from our website for other states to use the programming time we spent for their use. We are planning on using the other products in the catalog to enhance our offerings to the public in the upcoming program year.

5. COVID-19 Response

Our LMI shop has seen a tremendous increase in requests for information since the beginning of the pandemic. Since so many of the requests were for real time data, we began to produce a weekly press release with claims data, demographics of claimants, visual representations of where claims were located, as well as claims by different workforce areas. Once this was established, many of the requests could be answered using one or all of those documents.

One thing that we did notice is the increase in the variety of requestors the Virginia Employment Commission was receiving. Normally a lot of our data users are other agencies or those in the immediate workforce realm. In the past 20 months we have seen an increase in media, legislators, citizens, research groups, and others requesting in-depth analysis or questions. It has led us to explain some things further in publications or ideas for new products that may appeal to a wider variety of audiences.

It seems that there has been an increase in cooperation between agencies to coordinate their efforts to reach as many people as possible. We saw an increase in agencies asking for data jointly rather than as all separate entities.

One unexpected bonus of the pandemic was the collection of data on populations that are usually unaccounted for as they are non-covered employment. It has led to requests for analyzing that data to see how assistance and support services might be targeted best to reach those populations. It will be interesting to look into this data further when time and workloads permit more in-depth analysis and where those constituents fit in the Virginia economy.

6. Recommendations

No recommendations.

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