

**Understanding Labor Market Information For Agencies/Programs Serving Refugees
July 31, 2014**

Coordinator: Welcome and thank you for standing by. At this time all participants are in a listen-only mode for the duration of today's call. Please be advised today's conference is being recorded. If you have any objections, please disconnect at this time. I will now turn the conference over to Ms. Louisa Jones. You may begin.

Louisa Jones: Good afternoon and good morning to those on the West Coast or earlier. This is Louisa Jones. I am part of the Bridges ACF technical assistance team. I welcome you to today's Webinar in understanding labor market information for agencies and programs serving refugees.

We are very much looking forward to this presentation. We've got two great presenters. We're going to dive right in here with a quick overview of labor market information and give you some specific examples of state and local peer programs who are really trying to use labor market information to inform how the refugee programs work.

Our first speaker today is Mr. Edward Trumbull, a Principal at ICF International. He has over 20 years of professional experience providing

successful workforce development solutions, conducting insightful research and analysis and fostering innovative job creation strategies.

Prior to joining ICF, Mr. Trumbull was the workforce and education advisor to a governor, executive director of a local workforce investment board, an architect of its award-winning one stop career dinner system.

He was also a management consultant to the leadership of the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration, an executive of several national workforce organizations. He is also an advocate of using labor market information to enhance employment and training initiatives.

Before I hand it over to Mr. Trumbull if you have any questions and answers during this session, you can we're actually only taking questions via the Webinar platform.

And if you look at the screen, you can at the top hand corner how to let you just type-in a question and do the Q&A button and we'll be taking those questions throughout the Webinar and then be answering those at the end. Today's Webinar we are very much focused on that we have a lot of information on some of our slides and we don't want you to be overwhelmed.

We just want to give you a quick overview and then we'll be providing this as a resource and sending this out to all participants and across the ORR and multi-tier TA list serve with all these materials so you can continue using them as resources and tools so with no further ado I'll hand this over to my colleague Mr. Edward Trumbull.

Edward Trumbull: Hi, Louisa. Thank you very much. It is a pleasure to be here and we also have some really august panelists. I believe Rebecca Armstrong, Blake Hamilton and (Tony Diaz) who will be joining us a little bit later and wrapping our presentation.

So kind of first and foremost so we've got some objectives today, you know, clearly we're interested in defining what labor market information is providing today's participants with some information sources, some strategies, how to use it.

Also identifying some publicly-funded workforce development programs that can particularly serve refugees and definitely want to provide some promising practices and strategies. I think it would be very helpful to actually start with a broad definition of labor market information.

And clearly it's economic trends, job prospects and demographics and it's actually not a standalone. I mean, it needs to be complemented with an individual's unique abilities and their interest and their values and for us as workforce development professionals we're clearly interested in people making good employment decisions.

And so the idea is to integrate labor market information with an individual's unique knowledge, skills and abilities so it's kind of a broad definition of labor market information I'm sure other colleagues can amplify.

And that one of the reasons, you know, another question is like well why is it important and just thinking back this past year, you know, the United States with its about 320 million people, about 116 million in the civilian labor force. Well for the period from May 2013 to May 2014 there 55.3 million new hires in the United States. That's tremendous labor market movement.

And at the same time over that one-year period of time there was a net employment gain of about 2.3 million individuals so that shows you the dynamic nature of the labor market and one of the reasons why it's so important for us to follow it and be students of it.

So another question is like how does this apply to me and so, you know, clearly we're interested in learning about fast-growing occupations and industries. Clearly we're interested in openings for specific occupations, educational attainment, wages, you know, the size and demographics.

But I actually think the most important is actually the gaps in the labor force and just today, you know, it's very topical. In today's Wall Street Journal in the marketplace section, first page is actually a lengthy article, skill shortages meaning many jobs are going begging so (title on it) and it's actually targeted on small employers.

And the article references small employers from Ohio and New York, Indiana, Kentucky, talking about manufacturing, landscaping, wholesale trade businesses, logistics, so it actually LMI is very topical, it's very dynamic and it's something that we need to know very well so we can assist people to become well-employed and good wages, family-supporting benefits and long-term retention.

So in ICF - ICF International which Louisa and (Annameda) and (Nathan) and I have the privilege of working for and we actually do a tremendous amount of research and analysis and we recently this slide actually it's called a heat map and you can see from the light blue to the yellow to the orange to the red actually shows jobs and it actually shows jobs and growing jobs.

And so I wanted to provide this as like an illustrative example of how labor market information can be applied and so you can see that it's actually all across the entire nation, not just specific regions of the United States.

Although you can clearly see from like the coastal areas from Seattle down through Los Angeles, across Texas, Florida and up through the mid-Atlantic into New England, you can see that there's projections for significant occupational growth in areas with low skills, medium skills and high skills.

And the red areas that's hence the team heat map actually shows areas that are going to grow between 100,000 and 200,000 those various occupations and the sources for the information are publicly available and so I'm sure Mr. (Diaz) and Rebecca, Ms. Armstrong will be able to go into this in a little bit more detail but this is all public information.

And so we just have the ability to combine big data to present it in a GIS format so it's user-friendly and as you can see our data sources, you know, we use the United States Department of Labor employment and training administration. They have terrific data sources.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics, but we also capitalize upon local areas, state workforce agencies, local workforce investment boards and that actually helps us generate a tremendous amount of the labor market information.

So going back, one of the areas that we're particularly interested in, we've done some really interesting work in Florida and as you can see the low, medium and high occupations there's tremendous projection for job growth in all of those skill areas.

And so we've been privileged to actually hired by the State of Florida to do some very detailed analysis of the labor market information and clearly their interest was to help identify in-demand occupations and then help their citizens, their residents and their refugees actually identify, you know, align those occupations and (then to be) occupations with the knowledge, skills and abilities of people in that state.

And the whole goal is to have a higher probability of job placement and long-term retention so what's interesting is when we actually as a case study for the State of Florida you can clearly see, you know, looking at that larger heat map and then actually going down to this specific map you see tremendous growth in the Central Florida area, the Miami-Dade area and the Tampa area so with just a tremendous number of jobs created and projected in the future.

When you actually get into the specific occupations, the specific jobs and you tease it out and this is very important to all individuals but especially refugees, I mean, in Florida there was a period of time from 2012 to 2020, you know, the industries that jump out, you know, construction is expected to grow by about 181,000 jobs, healthcare 260,000 jobs, professional services 174,000 jobs and travel and tourism about 120,000 jobs.

So you know, clearly to align in Florida, you know, clearly to align the employment and training opportunities with those in-demand employer-driven job opportunities that seems to make, you know, a tremendous amount of sense.

So we kind of teased it out a little bit more and we actually wanted to overlay, you know, assess the types of low-skill jobs with the types of training and experience required and so here, you know, it's kind of interesting is that you actually see reinforced how important healthcare is.

So specific areas, you know, registered nurses so, you know, and an Associate's degree but no real experience related (then actually) a patient and no on-the-job training to attain competency. Of course, you know, over time an individual will acquire more experience but we also see that with home health aides, with nursing aides, with orderlies, with attendants.

So it kind of reinforces the dramatic growth in healthcare but it also shows specific occupations where individuals in Florida should be interested in securing employment, then they can also see what the educational need is, the experience and on-the-job training.

So we've also done some - we've actually split the state into specific regions - and so to share with you that it's not just all about construction, it's healthcare and tourism but you can see in this region it's clearly there's a tremendous interest in logistics and warehouses and transportation.

You know, the projected gap for, you know, truck drivers and actually there's a national need for commercial truck drivers and then light service delivery so you can see between the two of them that's nearly 21,000 jobs that are expected in this period of time for this specific region of Florida so the State of Florida was also interested in actually looking towards the future.

So it's not just farther in the future so they were interested in their foundational sectors, what they refer to as an infrastructure sector and emerging sectors but the ones that you might look farther out - these high-impact sectors - and the reason why I'm sharing is actually I know we're interested in helping people become employed today.

But we're also interested in preparing ourselves to help people and that's why it's important to know about, you know, the future opportunities in clean energy and the life sciences, biotechnology, homeland security and defense so they're a farther out horizon but they're definitely part of labor market information.

So the work that we did in Florida which is actually applicable all across the United States so we basically took an inventory of the current capacity and then as you can from the previous slide you can see we were interested in doing future projected growth - industries that were going to grow in the future - and then we performed a gap analysis.

And so the gap analysis actually showed the areas of education skills that would be needed and then helped the state actually create a targeted occupational list. This is an area that the State of Florida is going to emphasize for people to become - acquire these skills - the knowledge skills and abilities.

But it also it creates it's a marketplace opportunity so we as workforce development professionals if we realize that there's specific gaps in specific occupations, we can fill those gaps. They may be future market niches for us to, you know, encourage people to look for careers or entry-level employment in those jobs so at the request of Florida we also did an asset mapping.

So here and this kind of aligns to the current capacity and also aligns to that projected growth so here in the north-most region of the State of Florida which is, you know, from Pensacola which would be adjacent to Alabama all the way over to Panama City to the state capitol in Tallahassee, you actually you see a tremendous amount of public resources.

There's tremendous investment in the public-financed employment and training system. We have articulated the national emergency grants, the trade adjustment and community college career training grants, the funding from the Workforce Investment Act, the adult and dislocated worker use programs, (TANF), career and technical education.

And we've also overlaid some of the more significant physical resources - the military installations, the seaports, the major airports - and that's to provide local workforce development professionals, you know, with a good idea of what their local assets are so that they can capitalize on them.

And we actually took it a step further so in addition to doing this asset mapping and we consider all of this as labor market information, we also did a resource matrix.

So for individuals and program operators at the state and local level, you know, that are interested in leveraging other public workforce funds such as, you know, the Wagner Kaiser program, the WIA Adult programs, the WIA Youth programs and I can actually speak to firsthand experience that they can make a tremendous benefit for refugee programs.

But I thought it would be better if we actually if I shared two illustrative examples where labor market information and using WIA program funds have actually resulted in really positive impacts for refugees.

And one of the programs is called IRCO and IRCO's actually out in Portland, Oregon and has an excellent reputation and they run very well thought through programs when working with refugees but they clearly work with their local workforce investment boards.

They've clearly discovered an interesting labor market niche. They do a lot of work with Alaskan fisheries and they've actually become a recruiting resource for Alaskan fisheries and so in addition to providing this labor market information for refugees and other individuals that are interested.

You know, they're involved with workplace communication, conflict resolution, they actually do coaching for the individuals, you know, and interview skills and how to work in the United States.

But there's another organization that does some pretty impressive work with the refugees and WIA resources and that's this group called ADVOCAP which actually began as a community action agency in the mid to late '60s in Wisconsin and their whole mission is to eradicate poverty in a very rural area of the State of Wisconsin.

They're located between Lake Winnebago and Milwaukee. What's really interesting about them for years they've done youth apprenticeships and they've done fatherhood programs and healthy marriage programs.

Two years or so ago they're actually approached by their local community to actually become the one-stop operator for the American Jobs Center operator in that part of Milwaukee in that part of Wisconsin.

And so they very much embraced the use of labor market information to assist all interested individuals but their refugee population they've gone from helping maybe one or two handfuls of individuals to now well over 100 a year.

And they're very much using labor market information to help target in-demand occupations so those individuals become employed, have a career path and, you know, family-supporting wages and benefits.

But so kind of to summarize, you know, I definitely wanted to cover kind of a broad brush but LMI is kind of gives some specific examples at the state and local level and we'd be delighted to take any questions at the end of our presentation and I turn it back over to Louisa.

Louisa Jones: All right, thank you so much Ed and now I'm going to actually introduce Rebecca Armstrong. Rebecca Armstrong works at Higher in a refugee and employment program out of Lutheran Services.

Rebecca has been working in this field for more than 15 to 20 years and Rebecca actually has two co-presenters with her today but I'll let her present those along with her presentation. Rebecca?

Rebecca Armstrong: Thank you. Can you hear me okay?

Louisa Jones: Yes, we can.

Rebecca Armstrong: Okay, great. Thank you Louisa and Ed for that first part of the presentation. I am Rebecca Armstrong. I'm Higher so and providing technical assistance for refugee employment programs through the Office of Refugee Settlement since 1997 and our focus is on front-line and front-end service providers in an effort to strengthen self-sufficiency outcomes for refugees who are seeking and looking and starting on their path to integration.

We have a pretty broad reach and hopefully a good number of you know us already and know of our resources. For those who don't, we do several things

through online communications channels. We have a daily blog. We do live Webinars like this and we also have an online learning institute which has self-paced training courses available and I'll share information at the end about those things.

And we also do (interesting) training as well so one of the things that we love to do is act as a connector and today I have two connections to share with you, one at the local level and one at the national level to kind of give you a better picture of labor market information and understanding how to use it in your program.

So our first example builds off of the last thing Ed was talking about from the local providers and this is from International Institute of Saint Louis, I have Blake Hamilton on the line and Blake has been with the International Institute of Saint Louis since 2009.

He started as a job developer and he's now their workforce solutions supervisor. In this role he has begun partnering with the Saint Louis Agency on Education and Training and started attending quarterly workforce investment board meetings and he'll speak about how that has helped him to be able to be more strategic in their program planning.

I think that's a good point that Ed brought up about how we're looking for a lot of us who worked on the front lines are really focused on the day-to-day and looking for those jobs for the clients in front of us which is really important.

But labor market information can be really useful and valuable for longer-term strategic planning too so Blake's going to talk a little bit about that and then share one example to you so take it away, Blake.

Coordinator: Unmute your phone.

Rebecca Armstrong: You may need to unmute, Blake. Okay, I don't know if we're going to get him. I'll start a little bit and speak about his programs and hopefully he'll be able to hop on the line and share too so International Institute is a local office that is a part of United States Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, national program.

They've done a really excellent job in identifying gaps in services for the foreign population overall. Their expertise in what they've done for a long time is focusing on refugees and those other populations that receive ORR services but they took it broader to look at those gaps for the foreign population in general and started developing some holistic responses.

And that has led to some partnerships at the workforce investment board as well as getting some Workforce Investment Act funding so they have operated as a one stop for several years and provide services for that population.

One thing that Blake and I were talking about last week is that he really appreciates going to those workforce investment board meetings because he hears about new companies that are coming into Saint Louis and there's some past incentives that companies have who are setting-up shop in the area that it can really help them to take advantage of those to hire refugees.

So that helps him to think strategically and to start positioning his staff as well as their clients to be competitive for those jobs so one example he was going to share was a healthcare example and for our local hospital system they're working with and some of the supports that they provide is skills training that they have tailored to English language learners.

They do a lot of cross-cultural communication between employers and employees and then like I mentioned they really use their position and attendants that I work with investment board meetings in particular to help them stay current on job market trends.

One resource that Blake says he uses a lot is the (necessary) economic research and information center. That's a state labor market program and (obviously) we'll have those and I'll share a slide later from the Department of Labor where you can see where you can find out where your state is if you don't know already.

But that's a really good source of labor market information at the state level and he says he uses that, he uses them a lot and they have real good up-to-date information. Are you on yet, Blake? No. Okay, well if we don't connect with Blake then we'll have to have him be available for questions maybe later on in the chat box.

Edward Trumbull: Is there an instruction for how you turn your phone on or off to mute the phone and unmute?

Rebecca Armstrong: He would need to press Star 6 to mute and unmute if you can do that.

Coordinator: Excuse me, this is the operator. If we've had a speaker who may have dialed-in as a guest, if they need their line open, they would have to dial Star 0.

Rebecca Armstrong: Okay, he was already in as leader. Okay, so one case that stands out that he spoke about is that is an example of when labor market information doesn't tell the whole story so the labor market information that he got from the state

labor market program said that selling was a declining industry and there wasn't employers in the area who needed commercial sellers.

So that's what the labor market information we're showing but in fact they have several commercial selling companies that they work very closely with and that hire a good number of refugees and these are saying...

((Crosstalk))

Blake Hamilton: Hello? This is Blake. I am so sorry. I was not able to get out of mute. I guess it had me logged-in as a guest. I apologize. I have heard the presentation up to this point and I would like to further describe our partnership with (Weisman Dantzler) who's a large employer in the area.

They actually were a close partner of ours working with us to place clients in selling positions and we had received funding through WIA and our partnership with the local workforce investment board in the (sigmost) area agency on training and education for funding for that training program.

Additionally the (Weisman Dantzler) company provided material support to the program. It had hired a number of our clients, I believe it was about 85 in 2013 and in 2014 the industry - sewing and production - was rated a low-growth opportunity.

It was no longer listed on the targeted occupational list for the State of Missouri and as a result there was threat to the funding for that program as low-growth projection and we were able to secure a letter from the employer recommending that they keep the program available for WIA funding as they intended on hiring 100 additional folks for sewing over the course of the next year.

And we're able to work with the state agency to allow that funding to continue for that source and they've been a great partner for us and are very enthusiastic about the training and really helped save the program by their letter.

Rebecca Armstrong: Okay, thanks. Do you have the (and stuff I barely get on) I'm terrible with details. Do you have anything else you want to add about how you all are using labor market information in your partnership?

Blake Hamilton: Well, attending the workforce investment board meetings allows us to get access to information regarding upcoming construction projects in the City and County of Saint Louis and many of these projects we're seeing tax-increment financing and therefore are forced to go through the workforce investment boards and public employment centers for staffing those new jobs in the area.

And we hear about those things a little bit before they come down the pike for the rest of the community. I'm able to align our clients and get them ready and really screen individuals who might fit some open positions so giving us that heads-up and having really a great partner in allowing our clients access to these positions.

And even in some instances providing special assistance for them in a large job fair type setting and most recently we've been partnering with them to connect with our local unions and connect with the apprenticeship programs and they've been a great facilitator for that and advocate for our clients.

And one of the barriers we've been facing is folks need a high school diploma in order to enter the apprenticeship programs and they've been an advocate for

us to try to work around that with some of the unions and really let them know that we had a large demographic of individuals who are coming in with engineering backgrounds and that is very much an in-need occupation or in-need credential in the Saint Louis area.

And they've been really working hard on our behalf and with us for advocating for recertification and they just recently in fact last week suggested that they would like to partner-up on a grant to provide funding for individuals seeking recertification, funding that would cover the cost of degree evaluation and translation services.

Louisa Jones: Great, thank you, so it's really excellent to hear about that part too, great, great, so hopefully you can stay on the line and you'll be able to answer some questions when we get...

Blake Hamilton: Absolutely, I'm not going to mute myself again for fear of not getting back.

Louisa Jones: I was afraid to do it too myself so it's okay, thank you very much and for everybody on the line, thanks for enduring our technical difficulties. Okay...

Rebecca Armstrong: Hello, everyone.

((Crosstalk))

Rebecca Armstrong: I have a question for Blake while we have him on the phone for sure. How exactly were 100 people able to be hired by the sewing company?

Blake Hamilton: Those folks are people who pass through our training program, the sewing training was a six-week program. We accommodate about 10 to 12 students at

a time for that and we partner with them to use their - we're actually using their machines - that they're using at their worksite in our training.

And really the only requirement in the interview is completing a small sewing project efficiently and now that they've had the training their clients are mostly able to do that on the first try.

Rebecca Armstrong: Thank you.

Blake Hamilton: You're welcome.

Louisa Jones: Great. Okay, we're going to move on and talk a little bit about some strategies from the Department of Labor's Office of Workforce Investment and Employment Training Administration. You might hear that be called ETA. I have (Tony Diaz) on the line and I'm going to go through a few slides and then give him a chance to speak.

(Tony) works for the implement and training administration and was very gracious to share some great, excellent slides that I'm going to share in a few minutes and he's a former executive deputy commissioner of labor for the State of New York and the former deputy commission for the community services division as well.

He's joined ETA in 2001 and supports a variety of labor market information and workforce grants and in addition I put this piece of his bio upon the slide because I thought it would be interesting to everybody is that he is the contact manager for the LMI WIN-WIN Network Community of Practice and it's a great resource.

I have actually gotten in touch with (Tony) myself and (tend a lot) of really good information. A particularly large community of practice, I think he's got 100 members and a lot of good knowledge sharing and other information on there around labor market information and other workforce things so I encourage you to check that out.

So we wanted to talk about so here's one slide about what this is, what the WIN-WIN Network Community Practice page looks like so you'll see that there you can access recorded Webinars. There's another arrow at the bottom about a guide to state and local workforce data and you look at that on your own later too and as Louisa said, we'll be sending these slides out (unintelligible) on live links for all this information.

So here's some key terms I wanted to just go over that I thought these were really good definitions. You want to look at industries so those are describing what employers or businesses do, for the occupations for the work that's performed so those are important things to differentiate when you're looking at labor market information.

In addition on the Bureau of Labor Statistics which we'll show at the end and state employment figures, those are projections so you want to just know that because that's for a full year and hopefully (Tony) can speak a little bit more about that if there's any questions.

The last thing is that wages, earnings and compensations are broad categories of income and so the benefits are the non-monetary form so we are looking at any data that shows that kind of information you want to keep that in mind.

So some mistakes that can happen when we're looking at labor market information is to remember that unemployment and joblessness are not synonyms so only job hunters are considered unemployed.

So some people don't have a job but they're not actually looking for one so they're not counted in those figures. Another thing is that you have to really look at the historical and geographic context. If you're just looking at numbers without those pieces, they don't have much meaning.

And then you looking at raw numbers is typically less (equal) than the appropriate percentage because that would give you a context and then you also want to be careful about comparing numbers from different sources. You can get the same type of data from different sources but it can be collected in different ways so keep that in mind.

And then the last one important things to keep in mind is that most labor market changes and problems develop gradually over time so there's not many things that happen in a real fast or new way except during a recession so it's good to keep that in mind when you're looking at labor market information and using it for your program planning.

Here's some basic sources for state and local data and I wanted to really get down to those because there are some of you on the line who are on the front lines and those are the folks that I tend to think about the most as in our role as a technical solution provider is that we want to be able to get to the right information quickly because we don't have a lot of time.

We have a lot of clients who are needing jobs right away so here's some real good basic sources for state and local data so on the WIN-WIN Network Community of Practice there's those resources that we pointed to already.

Some Websites where you can get the state labor market information offices like the Missouri one that's like is connected to. There's a labor market LMI training institute directory but ETA has a state directory and then the Bureau of Labor Statistics also has a state contact list.

And then the ETA also has that guide that we showed on the previous slide for state and local workforce data that covers the good sources of government and private-sector LMI labor market information.

And then on the Bureau of Labor Statistics there's three geographic Websites you can look at and you'll see those there and again these will all be live links when it comes through to you to look at later.

So here's a screenshot on the Career One Stop Website and this map is a map that you can click on your state and it will pull up your state too so that can be a really easy way to go find your state, (state dinner) right there.

So we've talked a lot about state labor market information and some about the Bureau of Labor Statistics and those are both good sources of information for program planning and strategic things that you're working on.

If you're looking for those immediate job openings, there's a couple of places to look to have up-to-date current information, National Labor Exchange and then State Job Search tools and I want to spend a few minutes talking about those.

So again on the Career One Stop Website you'll see in the left-hand column it says find job banks and you can click on those to find job banks for veterans,

government job banks or private-sector job banks and then you on the map you can learn for your state jobs bank as well.

So here's a screenshot of the National Labor Exchange job bank and what's really great about this that (Tony) was telling me about is that it's current. They take information from a bunch of sources and put current new jobs on here and you can sort in a variety of ways.

One thing that I think is interesting for us in our network is that one of their areas of interest is diversity and that is important because of the population that we're working with. They add value to a lot of companies because of the diverse language and cultural backgrounds that they bring with them.

So in fact you can see that some of their future companies have a focus on diversity and their recruitment and hiring so you can search by that and you'll see that there's employers sort of high priority on diverse applications so that's good news for us.

And here's just one example so I just plugged-in security officer, that's a job that it can be common (unintelligible) job for somebody with some English skills but has a little bit higher wage letter looking to get back into a previous profession and so I just searched Ohio for security officers under the diversity jobs and there's a whole list of jobs that came up that are hiring right now.

And that's our last page but I'm going to go back in case (Tony) would like to add anything to the things that I've shared. We probably have about five or six minutes, go ahead.

(Tony Diaz): Well, very good. Why don't you go back to the community of practice page and I'll just add a few comments here. The U.S. job site that dot jobs is a real

new domain like the education domain is edu and the commercial domain is dot com so that national labor exchange is a partnership of all the states and the direct employers association which is a private-sector business which is focused on diversity and compliance with a wide variety of affirmative action and federal contract laws.

So they pull together and they screen-scrape and bring jobs in and they index - I'm sorry - they index jobs from company sites and so it's a great source for real-time labor market information and that's job listings and postings in the names and addresses and skill requirements for companies that want to hire right now.

So that's a great site. I just wanted to pull you back to the site and I don't have an arrow under it but under resources there are lots of resources here and we put a lot of them on our front page but under resources there's a folder called how to and under that folder you'll find training, e-training on labor market information.

We had a little grant a couple of years ago and worked with the State of Ohio and Mississippi and another one to create e-learning, self-paced training on using labor market information and not only using it for to support job seeker needs for information to help them make their career decisions but also for businesses and for workforce boards.

So to the degree that you have limited training resources, this stuff pays for material under resources under the folder called how to is available to you 24/7/365 and at the very low prepaid (back) price paid by government by your federal tax dollars at work.

I want to also make on other point that projections, projections are, you know, very important. Under the important documents, one can scroll down a little bit on this page and you would find another one of our little documents that we pulled together that will take you directly to the projections Webpage on state sites for your area.

And you can look at the projections and they're either short-term two years which are created by the states or 10 years and that would mean from 2012 to 2022. I think that's the latest Bureau of Labor Statistics projection, 10-year projection.

And it may indicate that in 10 years there might be a declining trend in sewing machine operators and it might be a declining trend in manufacturing but you need to know that because of the demographics of our American society people are getting older, they're retiring, they're leaving the labor force, the center where various manufacturing had once been may have moved to another area.

So that it may in an overall sense be declining but the need in replacement of workers because of retirement, death or movement is going to be there so manufacturing, advanced manufacturing, production workers are still in need and so look a little bit below the numbers and going to those meetings that the other presenter talked about, the workforce investment board meetings where you get a little heads-up about what's coming down the road.

It's also good to keep track of the economic development and Chamber of Commerce meetings that are going on or their minutes because they may also be identifying employment opportunities coming down the road that you can be prepared to assist in.

So I guess those are the two points I wanted to make. Thanks for using the data. It's there. It's available. I'm available and these Websites when you get the PowerPoint most of those links, most of all of those highlighted items are links and will get you to a great deal of data. Take it in bite-sized chunks and put it to work and inform every decision you make with labor market information.

Rebecca Armstrong: Great, thanks (Tony). All right Louisa, I think we're ready for questions.

Louisa Jones: All right, great. Thank you all for those great questions. I'm going to start with one that's going to be a little bit long but I'd like all your input on it. One I have this participant has found that statistics from her local career center do not match the job openings that she sees on a regular basis.

For example she heard from the career center that certified nursing assistant jobs would be decreasing in the next few years but all the employers she's actually talked to have said they will be increasing.

Additionally she's been tracking a number of CNA jobs that these employers are hiring for and they've gone up. Why do you all think this might be so and who really has the most accurate assessment of local job sector growth?

Blake Hamilton: I can speak from our perspective here in Saint Louis. We also have a certified nursing assistant training that is funded through our WIA program as well and what we've been told by folks is that the expectations for skills in that position are going to be higher in the future.

So folks who attain that certified nursing assistant job now will have to become recertified in the future to have additional job duties. That's something I've been told.

(Tony Diaz): This is (Tony Diaz). With the advent of being able to anyone can post a sign on main street on the Internet and we have job openings and so sometimes when you scrape or screen or look in a variety of sources, you might find duplications.

You might find that one business will post the job on three different or four different or even more sites where they're attempting to attract the best and brightest so that can give you a false positive that there are many, many, many more openings than there actually are.

On the other side local circumstances in areas where there's going to be a great need they tune-up the system and they create screening programs and they start cranking them out but if the hospital doesn't get built or the facilities that was to expand isn't expanding, you may end up with a surplus.

So to the lesson is essentially whatever the data tells you, you have to - real-time data tells you or you have to add here in the delicatessen what you're hearing at meetings - and what's going on on the ground to make the decisions. There is no one best absolute, they all have value but all data sources have value but you've got to balance that with experience.

Louisa Jones: Great, Ed do you want to add anything to that?

Edward Trumbull: No, so actually kind of complementary with what (Tony) and Blake were saying, actually those automated labor exchange systems, exactly as (Tony) was sharing so if you put CNA in and you do a job search, you know, within 5, 10, 25 miles of your zip code, you may find a number of CNA positions.

I know Florida has a very strong statewide system as do other states so that would just kind of give you some of that real-time labor market information that (Tony) was referencing but he's exactly right.

It's one of many resources and you have to, you know, use them all and come up with your best analysis. I definitely would strongly discourage from counting just on one system alone.

Louisa Jones: Great. My next question that we have in here is how have you overcome the difficulties in having refugees go through all the tedious processes at the workforce centers that are necessary to access the WIA funding so they're basically asking out, you know, how do you really help refugees really kind of navigate this without knowing all the kinds of ins and outs of labor market information and all the processes?

Rebecca Armstrong: That's a great question and I will let Blake speak to it because he's doing it on a daily basis but it definitely comes up a lot.

Blake Hamilton: Yes, thanks. We recently faced obstacles taking folks down there to the office to complete the registration process for accessing those jobs and upon completing that project I reviewed what we had to go through with the executive director.

And we discussed the opportunity of possibly doing preregistration with our clients in our facility prior to heading down there to complete as much of that as possible under the supervision of folks who are comfortable and confident working with low-level English speakers here at our offices.

In addition we were able to talk about securing training for their staff there in working in a multicultural environment and working with low-level English speakers so we're hopeful that this two-part solution will ease that process.

That is an obstacle that we have faced regularly but again through our partnership I think we've come up with some pretty exciting solutions to work around that.

Louisa Jones: Great, thanks.

Edward Trumbull: Great, Blake. I think that's just exactly right. I take on behalf of the system and the bureaucracy I take on some responsibility that because Congress providing the funding also included some requirements to identify the outcomes and to know who's been successful and how many people have been enrolled and what are the characteristics and those sorts of things?

Our system since it began in the '60s, you know, the intervention kinds of systems have always had to collect a good deal of data about who the customers are and sometimes whether they're economically disadvantaged or otherwise and that can be a burden and a bear.

And if you have challenges dealing with this new kind of structure, doing it in advance, doing it in a comfortable environment with support likely will go a long way in every American job center to have that application process be more streamlined and a better experience than why does it take so long.

Louisa Jones: Great, I think I have two more questions before we'll close this out. One is kind of a follow-up to this question what about bypassing the workshops and meetings that are required? Have you found a way to bypass those?

Edward Trumbull: What are they?

Blake Hamilton: What meetings, yes, I'm unclear.

Rebecca Armstrong: The I think the question is referring to some of the workshop the meetings are required to meet with WIA as partners.

((Crosstalk))

Rebecca Armstrong: So the refugees can meet with the WIA agencies.

Edward Trumbull: So, you know, we're all familiar that there's a triage of services, you know, core intensive in training and so with the WIA services so yesterday the House of Representatives just passed the new Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and actually one of the things that the Act does away with it's what's called sequential service.

So actually in the future individuals should be able to, you know, it still needs to be signed by the President. It's been passed by the House and the Senate but it would do away with (ex-members) for sequential service so hopefully that'll be more streamlined in the future.

And I would also suggest during the next year or two as states and local areas develop their new strategic plans for implementing those services, those Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act services that they participate in the development of the plans so it could incorporate other perspectives of service providers that work with refugees.

(Tony Diaz): I think that's - is that Ed - was that Ed just speaking?

Edward Trumbull: It was, (Tony).

(Tony Diaz): Yes, exactly right, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act just passed hopefully enacted very, very, very soon. Great point. On the other side there has been concern in the past that in the long-distance past that people were not being made aware of the wide variety of services available to them in a center particularly when we moved from the silo-based like the employment service had its range of services and unemployment had its range of services and they were typically on one side and then training programs and community-based organizations it all had different services that they could offer.

And when, you know, these were merged into one-stop centers, the desire to make sure that job seekers and customers had a sense of the wide variety of services available, early orientation sessions, you know, mandatory orientation sessions for some who were collecting benefits for example or who were required to report, those kind of orientation sessions were out there.

That's not sequence of service. That is part of the assurance that all job seekers are being given good information about the range of services available so there's no disparate impact or someone who, gets down the road a ways and realizes oh, if I only knew that that service was available, I might have taken it so there's a balancing act there and that balance can only be struck locally.

Rebecca Armstrong: Okay, great, thank you all. I have one final question that might be a little bit more for Blake but all please chime in. In terms of all of this labor market information, this is all great information for refugees, agencies and organizations.

But how do you broach this subject of labor market information to refugees who may not necessarily understand the difference between federal information, state information, all the different wonderful resources that are out there. How do you kind of get that down to some nuts and bolts for them to understand what they're doing?

Blake Hamilton: Well, I think part of it is definitely that this information should be guiding outreach efforts by those folks who are sourcing positions and I think this information is more of use for individuals who are planning outreach efforts.

The sites themselves are definitely useful for individuals who are looking to apply for positions but in that sense they're somewhat are not very different from, you know, your average job site and that it's a way to access a position.

But in terms of strategic growth and opportunities that lie ahead in terms of focusing training efforts and things like that, that's where this information is most useful.

An individual refugee coming in, we don't need to necessarily explain this entire process. We just want to provide them with as many good opportunities as possible and opportunities for training and that's where the application of the information that lies in these services I find to be most practical.

Rebecca Armstrong: Okay, this is Rebecca and I was just emphasize that and agree that it's I think as service provides we can be the ones that really focus on the details of the information and then to think about the best way to prepare refugees for the jobs that are emerging in our communities or that have good opportunities so yes, that's great.

Louisa Jones: Great, thank you. I think that's all the questions we're going to take today so I really just wanted to say thank you on behalf of the Office of Refugee Resettlement and the Bridges project to all of our presenters today.

This has been a wonderful introduction to understanding labor market information and we hope everyone has a wonderful afternoon and we'll sign-off for now. Thank you so much everyone.

Coordinator: This now concludes today's conference. All lines may disconnect at this time. Speakers please hold for your post-conference.

END