

**ACF Webinar**  
**Using Labor Market Information to Design Job-Driven Training Programs**  
**March 25, 2015**  
**Transcribed by Pearl Interactive Network**

[Operator]: Please standby, we are about to begin. Good day and welcome to the HPOG webinar entitled "Using Labor Market Information to Design Job-Driven Training Programs." Today's conference is being recorded. At this time I would like to turn the conference over to Caterina Bummara. Please go ahead Ma'am.

[Caterina Bummara]: Thank you. Good day everyone. My name is Caterina Bummara. I am the HPOG Virtual Coach from ICF International, and I'm pleased to welcome you to today's webinar, "Using Labor Market Information to Design Job-Driven Training Programs," sponsored by the Office of Family Assistance. Before we dive into content, I'm going to touch upon a few webinar logistics. During today's webinar, we will only be taking questions online via the Questions-Answer box. At any time during today's webinar, you can ask a question by typing it into the Q & A box on the webinar platform as shown on your screen here. The Q & A box will be next to the PowerPoint presentation at the right part of your screen. We will address questions during the question and answer session following the presentation. For our webinar today, we will first hear from Stan Koutstaal, Program Manager for the HPOG program, followed by Joshua Fangmeier, Senior Health Policy Analyst at the Center for Healthcare Research and Transformation, and co-author of "Using Labor-Market Information to Design Job-Driven Training Programs." And finally, Pam Frugoli, O-NET and Competency Assessment Team Lead, Employment and Training Administration at the Department of Labor.

I will now turn it over to Stan Koutstaal for introductory remarks.

[Stan Koutstaal]: Good afternoon or good morning, depending on what part of the country you're in. Thanks so much for that introduction, Caterina. It's my pleasure to welcome you today to this webinar, and to share some strategies for developing a job-driven training program.

To provide some context, I'd like to talk just a few minutes about the vice president's report and a new law. Last year, the vice president led a review of federal job training programs. This process resulted in the creation of a report called "Ready to Work: Job-Driven Training and American Opportunity." The main conclusion of this report is that training programs should be designed for jobs that actually exist. When people complete a training program, they should have confidence that a job is available that is closely aligned with the training they received. On the same day the vice president delivered his report, the President signed into law "The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act," also known as WIOA. WIOA reflects the strategies identified in the report encouraging the use of labor market information and coordination with employers so that job seekers acquire the skills and credentials that meet employers' needs. Although labor market information can be complex, it's important to understand that it's not a math equation that can be solved. There's not one right answer. Instead, education and training programs should be looking at the best available evidence on a regular basis, talking to employers to verify their needs, and making program decisions based on that evidence.

I know that many of the people on this call today are anticipating the release of the new funding opportunity announcement for the HPOG Program at some point in early April. That funding opportunity announcement will include a process for answering any questions that you may have at that time. We won't be addressing questions about the funding opportunities announcement today, but I can

say that HPOG Program is the national model in implementing the strategies described in the job-driven training report, and that these strategies are critical to the future success of any federally funded job-training program.

So with that, I would also like to extend a special thanks to Joshua Fangmeier and Pam Frugoli. I think that you will find that they are experts that will shed light on this important topic, so with that I will turn it back over to Caterina.

[Caterina Bumbara]: Thank you very much. I will now turn it over to Joshua Fangmeier for his presentation.

[Joshua Fangmeier]: Thank you, Caterina, and thank you Stan, for that great introduction and great overview of the workforce environment that we're in regarding training programs.

So towards the end of last year we developed a report that looked at strategies that different training programs could implement in terms of using labor market information to identify and train their workers for job-driven strategies. Some of the values that we want to share in today's webinar [include] ways [for] training programs to understand the local supply and demand of trained workers; being able to identify emerging careers and have pathway opportunities and offer family sustaining wages; being able to understand how to match the training skills that employers are seeking; and finally, being able to measure the results, and fully being able to evaluate employment and earning outcomes for people who graduate from these programs.

To do this, we developed an eight-step process for training programs to look at and gather labor market information and then to make decisions based on it. The first five steps involve this form of intelligence gathering: looking at data, talking to employers, and trying to understand the picture of employment for the occupations of interest. And the final three steps are about how to use this information to make program decisions and to develop a culture that is data-driven.

Step one involves looking at what many people call traditional labor market information to understand the trends of employment for occupations of interest. This involves going to many different state, local and federal government agencies that track this sort of information, and being able to look at key indicators of employment including the number of people who are employed based on their occupations, what industries they work in, and the growth rate. And with all this work, it is very important to have a comparison group to assess these numbers against. Being able to look at growth rates on their own isn't very valuable unless you have a rate to compare it against.

As I mentioned, there are a variety of different data sources where traditional labor market information is available from. This includes resources that are available from the federal government, particularly the Bureau of Labor Statistics which publishes the Occupational Employment Statistics and the Occupational Outlook Handbook, as well as state labor agencies that produce their own state and regional estimates. And also there are commercial data vendors who will either pull all of this information together in one place, or offer their own data to supplement the publicly available information. [The] strengths of this sort of traditional labor market information includes statistical reliability across industrial sectors, so it is really a good source of information across the U.S. workforce. This information also uses common classification systems with common coding so, for example, a registered nurse, who is identified as such in one data source, can often be matched against other data sources that also use the same classification system.

A major advantage of using traditional data is that it is publicly available and is often free of charge and is easy to access, but there are some limitations. Since much of traditional data is based on surveys, there tends to be [a] pretty significant degree of geographic variation in terms of detail, with rural areas having less available information and less detail compared to more urban metropolitan areas. And since this also comes from a survey, it can take some time to gather and process the survey results and being able to publish them. So sometimes it can take -- sometimes the information can be a year, two or three years old by the time you are looking at it compared to when you want to use that information.

Some important trends to look at when it comes to this traditional information: What has the employment level looked like over the prior decade? What [does] the breakdown for various occupations look like by industry -- for example: how many registered nurses are working in the hospital setting as opposed to physicians' offices? And what [does] the outlook for these occupations look like? Both the federal government and states create their own 10-year projections for various occupations. In most cases, [for] all occupations that they have information on [they are] looking at the number of projected increases in employment but also the number of job openings that are expected on an annual basis.

So throughout the paper and throughout this presentation, we include real data for the Detroit metropolitan region to illustrate examples of labor market information. So in this case, we have data from 2010 and also projections up to 2020 for three occupations of interest for our community college. In this example, one of the things that we see is that the projected increase in the number of registered nurses is over 17 percent compared to a total increase of employment of 11 percent, indicating that registered nurses are expected to grow pretty significantly within Detroit. Also of interest is, for nursing assistants, the number of job openings due to growth is more than half of the total number of annual openings, indicating that this is an occupation where there is going to be a lot of new openings due to growth as opposed to just replacements. On the other hand, for health information technicians, another occupation of interest, there's a relatively low number of expected annual job openings with only 64 on an annual basis.

[Long pause 11:02]

So one resource that is really helpful to compliment the traditional labor market information is to use so-called real-time labor market information, and this information is gathered through internet job postings to show much more in real-time and up-to-minute what the employer demand is looking like for various occupations. Much of this data is available through online companies who gather this information using internet algorithms, and they often charge licensing fees for consumers to access this information. Some of the information they provide includes job posting trends as well as the education experience requirements within these job postings. As I said, it can be very helpful to compare this real-time data to traditional LMI [labor market information].

As I mentioned, when it comes to data sources, proprietary commercial vendors are leading the way in providing this information, but increasingly some state labor agencies are developing reports and making this information available. States such as Pennsylvania and Florida have already begun this, and some more are beginning to do this as well, but it is not yet available from every state.

Some strengths of real-time data include that it is quickly available and it often allows for a very local analysis of job postings. Many of the posting include some details on the employer: actually being able

to identify the employer, the wages that are expected for this new hire, and the education and skill requirements. The limitation is [sic] that we are looking at job postings and it is not always clear how many job openings, or actual jobs, are behind each of these postings. Another challenge is that many employers will post their job opening on multiple websites. So these companies who gather the real-time information have to remove the duplications but these methods of de-duplication do vary across vendors, so estimates may not be comparable across these vendors.

In addition, there tends to be a bias towards industries that post online. Industries like healthcare and information technology already post many of their job openings online, but other industries like construction tend to hire through alternative channels. And as I mentioned, since census data is gathered through proprietary vendors, they do charge licensing fees which can be a financial barrier for some program planners.

To illustrate an example of some real-time data, here's some job posting information for the second quarter of 2014 in the Detroit Metro Region and we're able to see the number of job postings for registered nurses and the other two occupations. As you can see, the number of postings for RNs is over 3,000, but the number of postings for health information technicians is over 300, which is quite a bit higher than the projected number of job openings from the traditional data.

After looking at the number of people who are employed in these jobs and what the job postings are showing, it's also important to look at the wage variation in the wage levels that these occupations are currently offering. So this sort of information is available from both public and commercial real-time data sources, and that includes both median and average wage levels. Indicators that can be important include looking at the median wages, the location quotient which I'll get into in a moment, and the wage ranges.

As I mentioned, it is available from both federal and real-time sources like both traditional and real-time data. Some strengths of the traditional data include that it is statistically reliable. On the other hand, some of the strengths of real-time data [are] that they were able to get some information that is much more current, and can help reflect starting wages for these occupations. But a challenge and a limitation of looking at some wages is that it can be hard to reliably estimate how much a worker's wages could grow as their experience grows. That is a little bit more difficult to just get from readily available statistics.

Again, here are some of the key indicators to keep an eye on to understand wage variation, such as the median wage. So instead of looking at the mean, which can be skewed based on [the] number of people who have very high or low wages, median just shows just right at the middle of the distribution what the wage level is. The location quotient is not necessarily a direct measure of wages, but it is related because it shows the prevalence of an occupation compared to the national average. For example, vocation quotients with a value greater than one mean that within that region, that occupation has a higher degree of concentration than it does nationwide. Wage ranges are also important because they may be able to show pathway opportunities to grow within an occupation, as the ability of workers to earn more within that occupation over time or within, by staying in that occupation -- And as I mentioned, starting wages can be available through job postings.

Some example data that we have is again for the Detroit Metro Region, and one of the first things we see is that the median wage for registered nurses is quite a bit higher and almost -- at least -- twice as high as the two occupations. For nursing assistants, one of the things that we see is that the range from

the 25th percentile to the 75th percentile is just over \$3, showing that there is very limited opportunity within this occupation to experience wage increases.

In terms of looking at the Health Information Technicians, one of the things we see is the location quotient is less than one, indicating that health information technicians are less prevalent in Detroit than they are nationwide, which is a bit surprising given the size of the healthcare industry already in this region. But looking at the wage ranges for health information technician, they are significantly wider than they are for nursing assistants, showing that there could be the opportunity of being able to go from about \$14 an hour to over \$21 an hour within this occupation.

So that kind of covers the demand side of looking at employment, but it's also very important to look at the supply side, and one of the ways we can do this is by looking at measures of local training capacity: How many new workers are coming into the labor force? And this is important especially for training programs to avoid over-saturating the labor market with new workers where there is not necessarily enough employer demand to hire them. Fortunately, there is good high-quality completion data through federal government agencies that track these things, and some of the indicators that are important is that this information [sic] allows program planners to look at not just the number of new graduates, but also breaking it down by their education levels.

So the primary data source for measuring local training capacity is the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System that is available from the U.S. Department of Education. Some strengths of IPEDS include that it is incredibly broad, and includes every institution that participates in Federal Student Aid Programs. It does include some breakdown that allows program planners to see the number of new graduates by their degree or certificate type. However, some limitations of IPEDS include that it does not include data on where graduates ultimately work; it just shows what institution they graduate from. And IPEDS data is available by instructional program code which needs to be matched to occupations, and sometimes it can be complex to match these program codes to occupations. For example, many different programs could lead towards training a health information technician, whereas on the other side, many nursing programs can lead to many different nursing jobs. So program planners need to be very conscious of this when they're looking at this data.

Here's some example data, again for the Detroit Metro Region, of the IPEDS data. In this data table, we're looking at every institution within the Detroit Metro Region, but data is available by each individual program. So one of the things that's helpful for is that for program planners who are interested to understand how their program compares to their peers, they're able to pull the information for each institution individually. But again, as I said, this includes data for every program within this region. One of the interesting findings looking at this data is that for registered nurses, one of the things that we see is that almost half of new registered nurse graduates have a two-year associate's degree. And this is an increasingly difficult issue for many new RN graduates as hospitals are increasingly [requiring] new RNs to have four-year bachelor's degrees.

So after gathering all of this data and looking through all of these figures, it's also important to have an informed conversations with employers who can help verify this information, and also being able to share their own expectations around what they think in terms of future hiring. In terms of finding employers, we always recommend that programs go to their local workforce investment board to find employers, but there are also online directories that can be very helpful. One of the things that we also encourage is for programs to have conversations with employers to discuss the skill needs and identify the employer challenges. This conversation can include multiple steps, including a formal introduction of

your program to the employer and a discussion of the number of graduates that you're producing every year; then being able to talk about the data and solicit feedback on this information, especially how this information matches up with the employer's hiring expectations; being able then to discuss hiring issues that the employers face -- are there particular occupations that they're having a hard time filling? -- and then being able to invite the employer to advise your program, such as serving on a curriculum review committee to make sure that the skills that new graduates have match employer demand.

After going through steps one through five, we've developed a handy template where program planners can plug in all this information to allow for more easy interpretation by bringing all of this information together. So some of the highlights of the information that has been gathered so far is that we can see for Nursing Assistants, the number of job postings is far exceeding the number of recent graduates, indicating that there may need to be more graduates for this program to fulfill the necessary number of postings. In addition, for Health Information Technicians, we see that the number of job postings far exceeds the number of projected job openings, indicating that there may be more demand in the Detroit metro area for Health information technicians than what the traditional LMI data was showing us earlier.

Some basic tips for data interpretation:

We encourage program planners to use the most local data available that most closely reflects their service area. We also encourage them to match the dates of the data and regional geography as much as possible. This can be a challenge, as different data sources define regions slightly differently.

If an occupation is not recognized, we encourage programs to find occupations that have similar skill and education requirements. For example, in the HPOG program, many programs are training patient care technicians, which is not in an occupation that is currently recognized by the federal government, and so we encourage programs to identify occupations that are a close match to PCTs, and then we track those occupations and use them as a proxy.

It's also important to consider the strengths and limitations of the data sources when comparing these numbers, and as Stan mentioned at the beginning, to look at these numbers holistically and that there isn't necessarily an equation that says that an occupation is clearly in high demand or in low demand.

And where there is -confusion about the information, we do encourage programs to talk with their employer partners who can help fill in the gaps where there is confusion.

So after completing these five steps, we can now move into the next phase of actually making program decisions. Some examples of various types of program decisions include altering training offerings -- and not just to expand programs that show growth potential, but also being willing to wind down programs that show less potential. Also being able to make curriculum changes to meet employer needs, and adapting marketing materials to showcase high demand occupations that have qualities wage levels. And also being able to use this information to identify employer partners and other partnership opportunities and work to expand them.

It's also important to measure the results of these decisions in being able to assess the success of the program and the participants coming out of the program, and this can be done through both tracking process and outcome measures for these graduates as they enter the workforce. In terms of profits measured, many of these are already collected by many different training programs through their

performance reporting system in terms of the number of students who enter the program, what their completion rates are like, what sorts of certificates or licensures they're able to achieve. But some other outcomes that may be of interest include -- other measures that may be of interest include outcome measures, such as the wages that new graduates are able to get in their first jobs; what sort of additional training they take on after that first job; and ultimately, what is their job retention rate like and do they move around from job to job, or are they able to stay in a particular job over time? And with all of this information, programs can begin to develop a return-on-investment calculation or other measure that can be helpful for funding partners.

And finally, in step eight, we very much encourage programs to think about this not just as a one-step process but as a systematic process. As a way of continuously having methods in place to be able to monitor employment shifts, especially in healthcare which is a rapidly changing and evolving workforce environment. This includes having regular decision-making, evaluation processes in place, and building a culture that emphasizes the importance of data collection and analysis that can help create a system through which everyone in the organization understands the importance of being data driven, and aims to act upon this information to work within the programs larger goals and objectives. This can be done through creating logic models that really emphasize building consensus around these program goals based on data, being able to continuously look at this information and make decisions upon it, and [being] willing to change decisions over time if new information can justify it.

So that wraps up the eight steps and one of the other resources we include in the paper is a cheat sheet that just provides a nice summary guide of the eight steps in these very quick to read tables. We include links to many different websites where all the data sources that we describe today can be found. Programs who are very interested in this information can begin looking at this, and begin to use this information to make program decisions.

And with that, I'll turn it over to Pam.

[Pam Frugoli]: Thank you, Josh, and I want to say thank you to the entire HPOG team for giving me some time on this webinar. We're really pleased with this guide and the efforts to use labor market information, and we also wanted to show you some of these websites so that you realize you can find a lot of this data really easily. I'm going to show you resources pulled from the Employment and Training Administration, where I work, and also from the Bureau of Labor Statistics where I'm going to start.

Josh has mentioned the Occupational Employment Statistics Survey many times. This is the homepage and the link to the homepage for that, and really, the easiest way to find a lot of the information he's talking about is if you scroll down to where you will see the occupation profiles -- down at the bottom here. And I want to point out this is May 2013 data, but actually, just today the ELS released the May 2014 data. So if you click on Occupation Profiles, you get the whole list of occupations by major group, and since this project is focusing on healthcare occupations, I wanted to point out that 29 is Healthcare Practitioner and Technical Occupations, and 31 is Healthcare Support Occupations, so you can just go right to that section. Then if you click on either of those links, you'll see the detail -- the full list of detailed occupations within those groups and the data that is available -- at the detailed level.

In this case, I selected an example of Pharmacy Technicians, and you can see that the mean wage and the median wage and the wage range are all there right at the very top of the OES report, just as Josh has shown you.

Then, if you scroll down that same page a little further, you'll see Occupational Employment by Industry. It's split three different ways: industries with highest levels of employment occupation, highest concentration, and the top paying industries. And while I didn't include screen captures in this presentation, if you kept scrolling down, you'd see also a number of maps that will show you employment by state, the location quotient by state, annual mean wages by state, and then also several maps by area -- usually metropolitan statistical areas and non-metro areas are [unintelligible], so you'll also see location quotient by area and annual mean wage by areas. Then there's some lists of top-paying metro areas and other data for non-metro areas, because as Josh mentioned, sometimes data for rural areas is sparse but they do show the highest employment levels, concentration and location quotients and top paying non-metro areas. However, one thing you cannot find on the Occupational Employment Statistics page is employment projections for the years ahead. That's a different section of a different program within the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

In addition, what we do at the Employment and Training Administration we have a source of data on the characteristics of bunches of occupations called O-Net Occupational Network and we have this site, O-Net Online, where we pull together a lot of the data, so descriptive data as well as labor statistics data and a bunch of links to state data and the Occupational Handbook and so forth.

I wanted to show you this because to actually find the employment outlook data -- and find and connect to the other things, this may be faster. So this is the homepage, and O-NET Online has a lot of different searches, but as you'll see here under "Find occupations," there's a drop down box and one of those searches is by Bright Outlook. Bright Outlook means that it's in demand: it's defined as occupations that are expected to grow rapidly in the next several years, or will have large number of job openings, or are new and emerging occupations. But since your focus for these grants is on Healthcare Occupations, I would suggest selecting the search option that says Job Families, similar to what we did on the OES page. When you do that you see basically there's a dropdown there and that same list; you'll see the Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Healthcare Port. And you click on "Go," and in this case, I selected Healthcare Support, and so you can see the list of healthcare support occupations. And what I've highlighted here is that if they meet the Bright Outlook standards at the national level, they will have this yellow sun icon. So actually, most of the occupations at the national level in this category are Bright Outlook, but some are not, and again I'll show you, when we click on one, that you will actually be able to see more data and then link also to state data.

So this is the O-NET report for [the] Medical Assistants occupation. This is actually the summary report and you can see it has lots of different information. At the very top, we show tasks and the tools and technologies used in the occupation. This can often be very important, both of these, for developing curriculum in keeping it up-to-date to reflect what's being used now. I'm not going to show you everything on this report because it goes on quite a bit, but I just want to highlight some relevant information that is mentioned in the guide. If you scroll down, there's a section on Typical Education and then also on Credentials. Okay? So you can link through and find training programs from either educational programs, and you can search by area, you can search by state and zip code. There's also a link to Find Certification. As you may be familiar in the health information technology area, there are quite a few certifications that are related to qualifying for those occupations. Also you can find information on licensing - okay, that would be by state, so I'd have to go State Search, but you can find the local licensing agency and get information on that. And then finally, if there are apprenticeships in your area, you can find out where those are and the contact information for that. Again, when you click on these links, you can go through to somewhere that will allow you to search by geography. To save time I didn't show a screen capture, but when you go on the site you can see how that would work.

So then, if you scroll further down that same O-Net report, we have a whole section on wages and employment trends. Now, again, this is still for this Medical Assistants occupation, and so we show median wages and employment and then the projected growth and projected openings. Again, it's national, but these links let you click through and look at state wages, and you select your state that you want to look at and also at state trends. It also tells you the top industry and, if you want, you can also directly link to job openings online from this site, so you could again look by area and find current job openings. There's also a whole section on additional information, so actually this will link you directly to the Occupational Outlook Handbook which provides more descriptive information, and to a number of associations in these professions, and to the educational accrediting organization. I think this is the one place where you can find a lot of the information you are looking for, or link through to it, and [it] also allows you to drill down by geography.

In addition, the Department of Labor sponsors a CareerOneStop electronic tool. O-Net online is really designed for career explorations. This actually has some more focus on different populations and different types of searches, but I want to show you if you -- actually, if you scrolled over this link here to Toolkit, what you would see is this menu here. And under the Training Option, you'll see those same things [where] you can search for certifications and for licenses, apprenticeship and local training, and actually all of the information that you would get to from O-Net is from this same database. We sort of reuse so that we don't duplicate each other's work. We link through where it makes sense.

Also, Josh was correct in that you may be able to obtain access to real-time labor market information by contacting your labor market information director. But in addition, this is one of the three online tools to look up employers in your area. It's called "Employer Locator." And you know, almost everyone knows the hospitals in their area, but you may not know all the clinical practices that might be relevant that might hire workers, or that might give you input on what skills they're looking for. So this is a free online tool for identifying local businesses. There's also a tool that lets you compare employment and wage data for up to five occupations -- in the occupation profiles. So, there are a lot of different tools on CareerOneStop that are worth exploring.

So this is really just sort of a brief overview, but we want you to know that it's definitely worth looking at labor market information, and we've tried to make it easy for you to find information that you will need, and thank you for the opportunity to show this.

Now I'll turn it back over to HPOG.

[Caterina Bumbara]: Thank you so much, Pam. This now opens up our question and answer session. And during this session we will address any questions that have come in through the Q & A box, and please feel free to continue to ask any questions by typing them into the Q & A box on your screen.

So we have one question that came through: "How often do you think workforce of training programs should review LMI to stay on top of local trends, and do you think this involves a dedicated staff person?"

[Joshua Fangmeier]: So, this is Josh. I can take that question. Regarding like whether it takes a dedicated staff person, I think it really depends on how sophisticated of an analysis or examination of this data programs are really interested in, because I think there are already a lot of existing partners either through workforce investment boards, or other local partners, who can help to provide a lot of that sort

of analysis, and not necessarily have to rely on the program itself to have a dedicated person. In terms of timing, it really -- it can vary a lot. As Pam said, the new OES data came out today, and so that's an annual release. Some of the other information is on a two-year cycle, but on the other hand, some of the real-time information, as I said, is continuously being updated. And so one of the things, especially with real-time data, is that it can be a good signal for employer demand. So being able to look at sort of the trends and how the job postings change throughout the course of the year and stuff like that can be important to be on top of, so that you're not just looking at postings for one particular point in time which may have just been a temporary blip on the radar, may have just been a temporary spike. So it's important to have a little bit more of a continuous eye on the real-time data and being able to do quick analysis on the traditional data when it does become available.

[Caterina Bumbara]: Great. Thank you, Josh.

Another question that came through: "What do you see as the biggest benefits or challenges for both real-time and traditional LMI data? And if my resources are limited, where should I emphasize my focus?"

[Joshua Fangmeier]: Yeah. This is Josh again. I would say if resources are limited, I would definitely suggest beginning with traditional data, because traditional data is free. It is usually very easy to access. Just showing some of the -- Pam showed that [with] some of these resources here, it's very easy to browse around and being able to look at some of these important indicators. And it's just a very good place to start for many programs who are interested in this type of work. As I mentioned, some of the challenges with traditional data is that it doesn't always reflect the labor market at that particular point in time. It could be a year or two old. But it is very reliable in terms of actually showing employment levels -- the number of people who actually have jobs, and is not -- unlike real-time data which is based on job postings that actually -- Traditional data is a reflection of actual employment which can be perhaps a more important indicator for many programs.

[Caterina Bumbara]: Thank you. Another question that came --

[Speaking simultaneously]

[Caterina Bumbara]: Oh yes.

[Stan Koutstaal]: This is Stan and I just want to add, particularly for organizations where resources may be limited, one of the things that they'll want to consider is partnering with another organization that does have those resources. And there may be a local One Stop or a local workforce investment board that already has access to good local labor market information that they would want to partner with. And, as I think Josh and Pam pointed to, there are contacts in practically every state for folks that are well-versed in labor market information.

[Caterina Bumbara]: Thank you so much, Stan. Another question that came through: "Do you have any tips for using LMI as effective employer engagement strategies that help align job training opportunities with the available jobs?"

[Joshua Fangmeier]: This is Josh again. One of the things I would definitely suggest many programs to do is to use online directories. Once they've done an examination of the data, and have found that maybe there are certain industries within their region that are projected to grow quite a bit that tend to hire

many of the occupations that they're training people for, they can use online directories that are publicly available to look for employers who fit that type, and that being able to identify those employers [sic]. And then work with local community partners like workforce investment boards and One Stops to develop connections with those employers to actually then have a conversation about, how can your training program best fit the needs of this employer who may or may not be having hiring issues for the occupations that you're training for? But I think the LMI data can help to create that connection with potential employer partners. And then it's really important then to have a good structure conversation with that employer to really gain this sort of insight that can lead to a program decisions that we've talked about.

[Pam Frugoli]: Hi, this is Pam, can I add --

[Stan Koutstaal]: Yes, yes, please do Pam.

[Pam Frugoli]: I just wanted to say that we also have a site with industry competency models on it, and there are three for health: allied health, electronic health records or HIT, and also long-term care. And they outline a lot of the competencies that workers need in the sector. That can sometimes be a good way to engage with an employer talking about -- this is sort of a national framework for a competency, but what skills are on this list are you particularly looking for or [are] having a hard time finding, and what else might you add? So it gives you something -- You don't go in there with a blank slate and say, "What are you looking for?" You're already informed.

[Stan Koutstaal]: This is Stan, and I would also add one other resource that folks would want to consider. The HPOG program has published compendia of promising practices, and some of those capture some strategies that organizations have used. For example, the Full Employment Council which serves the greater Kansas City area [uses] labor market information that is available online, but they also verify that with a panel of local employers to determine the menu of training programs that they ultimately offer to people that come into their agency. So, their story and others are available in the collection of Promising Practices.

[Caterina Bumbara]: Excellent.

Another question that came through: "With the fluctuating labor market and employee needs changing so often, are labor market projections reliable?"

[Joshua Fangmeier]: This is Josh. I would say it really depends on the indicator and the particular data source that you're looking at. One of the disadvantages oftentimes when looking at very localized regional data is that while it's able to produce an estimate -- for example, the number of people who have that job -- this is data that is based on surveys. So there are -- there's a confidence interval that's always around these numbers that it could be, for example, in a region [where] there could be 2,000 health information technicians, plus or minus 200. So we don't always have maybe the level of precision that we want. But on the other hand, that's why it's important to continuously be monitoring this data and looking for trends, because one of the things that's important is to be able to look over a period of time to see what that occupation is looking like, and then also being able to compliment that traditional data with real-time information. So you'd be getting two independent data sources looking together at an issue, and then if they conflict or if they are together, that can help show you whether or not maybe that is an employment with promising growth, or maybe that's an occupation that is maybe is going to

have a few more challenges. So I think that looking at multiple resources and looking at it a little bit over time can help overcome a lot of this fluctuation.

[Pam Frugoli]: Right, and this is Pam and I would just note that the employment projections do not project the business cycle. You know, they project for 10 years out given for employment, and when you average, you're just dividing the total growth over the period by 10, so it may not be that much each year. So particularly if there is a recession, then the employment projections may be off. But it's really good for the general trend and the overall magnitude, not necessarily, as Josh said, for the exact specific number.

[Caterina Bumbara]: Okay, great. We have another question: "Are you familiar with the data of the American Community Survey as a source for employment research, and if so, could you speak to that for a little?"

[Joshua Fangmeier]: This is Josh. The American Community Survey, formerly known as the Long Form Census Survey, includes a lot of really helpful information on people who live in households across the United States. It's actually a survey of people and not a survey of businesses, so it's a little different in that regard. And they do ask about the employment status and the occupation of people living within those households. So the American Community Survey can be helpful to understand -- maybe a little bit more information about the socioeconomic status of people who have different types of occupations. There's been some work that's been done, particularly by the Brookings Institute, that has looked at the number of people that have these occupations, and do they tend to be in low-wage households or whatever their situation is? So the American Community Survey can be helpful in that regard, but primarily much of the labor market information tends to come from employer surveys or a combination of employer and household survey information, not necessarily just household surveys by themselves.

[Caterina Bumbara]: Thank you for addressing that.

We have a couple more questions. One is, "Another limitation of IPEDS data is that it can't account for individuals that got training at an institution in a location" -- I just lost that question. Allen, can you jump on for that one?

[Pause]

Oh well, that question disappeared, so I will jump into another one that I see here --

[Speaking simultaneously]

[Office of Family Assistance]: This is the Office of Family Assistance. I still have the question up. The full question is, "Another limitation of IPEDS data is that it can't account for individuals that get training at an institution in a location they intend to leave afterwards. How do you account for that?"

[Joshua Fangmeier]: Yeah, this is Josh. Yeah, that is definitely one of the bigger challenges with IPEDS data. I think one of the things that could be done is if you have, for example, a council of education providers or other training programs within your community, I think through your follow up efforts of tracking people after they graduate and where they ultimately gain employment, you can develop maybe some ratios that would allow you to reasonably estimate the number of program graduates who

stay within the local market as opposed to leaving the market. So that unfortunately would require a little bit more follow-up work than just the standard IPEDS data readily makes available.

[Caterina Bumbara]: Thank you so very much, and thank you, David for that. Another question that came in: "I am at a community college training program. What kind of community partners should I connect with to get a better handle on LMI, and how can I use it?"

[Stan Koutstaal]: Pam, would you be willing to respond to that question?

[Pam Frugoli]: Could you repeat it? Because I think the guide is a really good way to get a handle on LMI, but -- but go ahead.

[Caterina Bumbara]: Yep. "I am at a community college training program. What kind of community partners should I connect with to get a better handle on LMI?"

[Pam Frugoli]: Yeah, definitely then the local workforce investment board and perhaps the local One-Stop career center or the American Career Center. And again, we have tools on the CareerOneStop where you can look up and put in your zip code and find those. So that's what I would say.

[Caterina Bumbara]: Okay, thank you.

And that brings us to the end of our question and answer session, and it's perfect timing, too, as well. So now, as we close out today's webinar, we have a few reminders for you and a few updates. So everyone that registered for the webinar will receive a follow-up email with a link to download the paper as well as notification [of] when these materials including the webinar recording and PowerPoint are posted online. Should you have any questions, please feel free to email [hpog@icfi.com](mailto:hpog@icfi.com).

Further, we have an upcoming basic skills webinar on Wednesday, April 29th from 3 to 4 p.m. Eastern. More information will be coming, and you can register to learn about research about the prevalence of adults with low-literacy skills in the U.S., emerging instructional models to help struggling students succeed, and programs that develop promising models with community partners and other service providers. The registration information is forthcoming and for more information, you can contact [hpog@provider-resources.com](mailto:hpog@provider-resources.com).

Finally, once this webinar closes today, you will be directed to a brief survey on today's webinar. Thank you and have a good day.

[Audio ends at 54:51]