Analyst Resource Center
Serving the workforce data community

Annual Report 2024

Summary of Accomplishments

Occupational Licenses: Research into the labor market coverage of licensed occupations and reciprocity is underway, improving understanding of how licensing impacts workforce trends.

LEWIS: Continued maintenance and support for the LEWIS system, ensuring states can securely aggregate OEWS data for custom regional analysis.

Training: Provided LEWIS training through both a large online session and an advanced in-person workshop, ensuring states have the technical skills needed to maximize their use of the system. WID Training was offered online to assist states in preparing for and implementing version 3.0.

Employer Database: Collected feedback from states on how they use the Employer Database, ensuring that future procurement decisions are better aligned with state needs.

Real-time Analytics: Conducted New and Emerging Occupations (NEO) research, comparing job posting data sources (Lightcast and NLX) to assess their strengths, weaknesses, and use cases for workforce analysis.

Virtual Meetings: Hosted topic-based virtual meetups between in-person meetings, allowing states to discuss emerging issues and share best practices in real time.

Forum: Overhauled and expanded the Projections forum to include LEWIS and ARC discussions, improving state-to-state knowledge sharing and resource access.

Contents

LEWIS 3

License data 4

Employer Database 5

Real Time Analytics and Job Posting Analysis 6

New and Emerging Occupations (NEO) Research 6

National Labor Exchange (NLX) Research 6

Collaboration 6

ARC Meetings 7

Forum 7

Training 7

Contact list updates 8

WID Database Structure 8

The Analyst Resource Center (ARC) is a cooperative group of states funded through the Workforce Investment Grant (WIG) to support a range of Labor Market Information (LMI) activities, including the Workforce Information Database (WID), state and regional projections, occupational licensing data, and research and publications.

ARC holds twice-annual in-person meetings, with virtual meetups on key topics in between. The grant is supported by staff in Minnesota and Utah, who not only organize meetings but also conduct research on emerging workforce topics, maintain essential software and data resources, manage occupational license submissions, and connect states with valuable tools and best practices.

LEWIS

The Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics (OEWS), a cooperative program between states and the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), is a foundational tool for many state job seeker resources and applications because it provides wage and employment information at the occupational level. The methods established by the BLS are nationally applicable and emphasize federal definitions and regions resulting in estimates for the nation, states and Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs). Many states have locally defined regions that are appropriate to their state needs and may have other state workforce resources supporting them, so having labor market information available at the locally-defined area of interest is of critical importance in order to evaluate the efficacy of those programs and interventions, as well as to support job seekers and employers in those regions. The OEWS survey has adequate sample to produce valuable statistics for these areas but requires sophisticated processes to correctly apply estimation and suppression routines.

The LEWIS application was originally desktop software developed in North Carolina as a means to aggregate OEWS survey data to state specified regions while still following the very specific procedures and suppressions defined by the BLS. Many other states saw the value in being able to produce reliable estimates for their state defined regions and the software was shared nationally and ongoing maintenance and support by the Utah Labor Market Information Tools and Applications (ULMITA) team under the ARC grant was established. Enhancements allowed wage and occupation filters, which some states use for research purposes to produce estimates on topics such as minimum wage jobs or combined clusters of occupations. LEWIS also provides a critical output for state projections methods, a deliverable under the WIG grant.

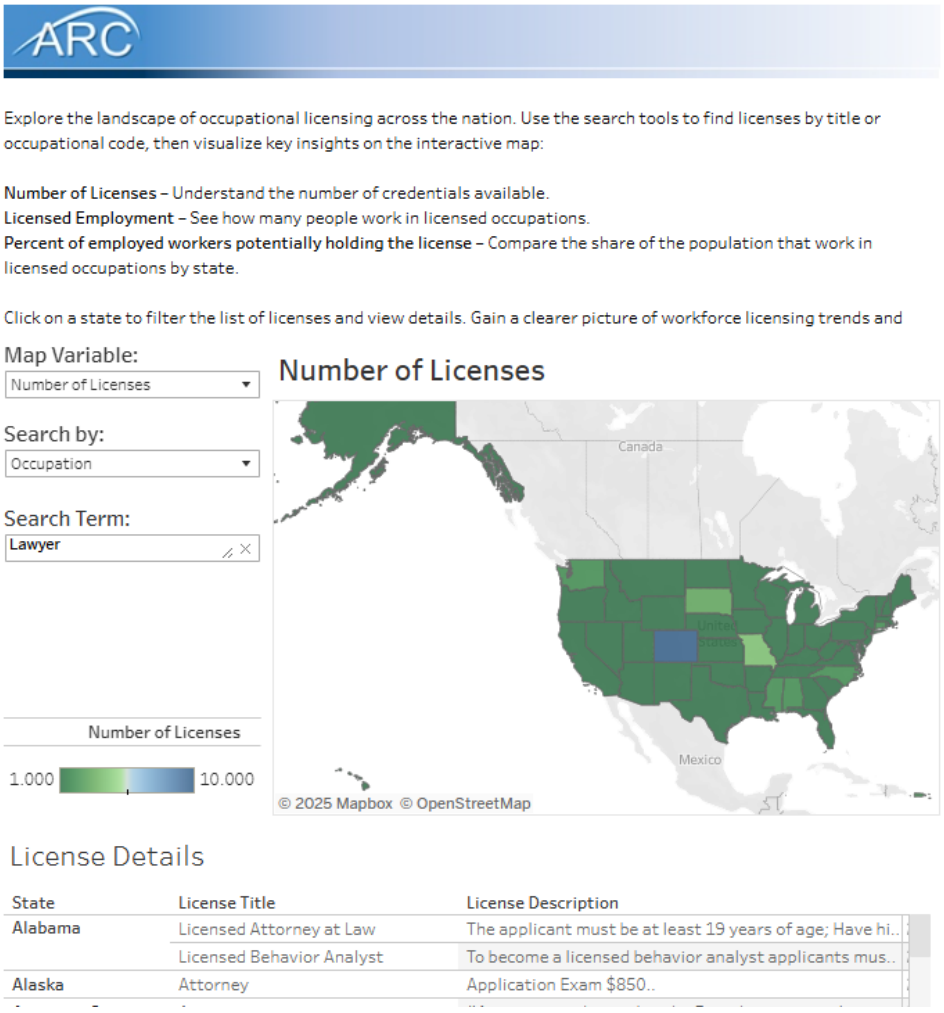
Following the 2022 implementation of the MB3 method, which allows for publication of smaller occupations but is much more intensive in terms of data processing, LEWIS has also become the only means of estimates review by states. Much of the thrust of the recent development work on new features has been to facilitate communications with BLS staff to streamline this and reduce redundant communications patterns. This work will continue in 2025.

In 2024 there were also adjustments to the LEWIS system to accommodate the switch from Township level microdata to County level microdata in New England States, and additional work on this is still being done. We are also working on integrating with QCEW microdata to add additional geographic details to the microdata for all states - but specifically so that we can enable New England States to produce township area estimates again. This was a significant change and required substantial updates to ensure data accuracy and consistency and has introduced some major changes to the mapping system in LEWIS, which is used to generate the Static HTML export as well as for use within the system.

License data

Occupational Licensing plays an essential role in maintaining professional standards, particularly in verifying the qualifications of workers who obtained their skills outside of four-year colleges. This helps job seekers in these paths, as well as consumers and employers who need verification that they're contracting with a qualified professional. The authority to issue licenses, though, is very decentralized. Each state has their own system, and many of them delegate that authority to volunteer boards that operate independently. Because of that decentralization, it's difficult to get a complete national list of occupational licenses and the ARC is the only organization that collects, aggregates, and publishes that data for all occupations nationally.

The ARC, which has been collecting occupational licenses from states since 1997, then combines the files and reviews and standardizes the content. Licenses and their characteristics are searchable on CareerOneStop alongside many other resources for job seekers. There's an API that also delivers the data to other entities such as ONET and Veterans' Resource organizations. The data are of particular value to military spouses who may need to relocate across state lines frequently, and get a license in each new location. States that don't have a central location to look up license details also refer job seekers to the CareerOneStop application or ingest data from their API. On the [WIDCenter website](), there's also an option to compare licensure coverage across states.



This is a significant effort dependent on the work of our staff in Minnesota. In recent years, most submissions occur at the June 30 deadline, so there tend to be two major periods of work. In July/August, all new submissions are incorporated to the primary database and reviewed. In February/March any late submissions are processed (a much smaller number) and a more in-depth review occurs, as well as central collection and updating. This includes federal licenses, license compacts, and top-level review of coding in case errors have crept in.

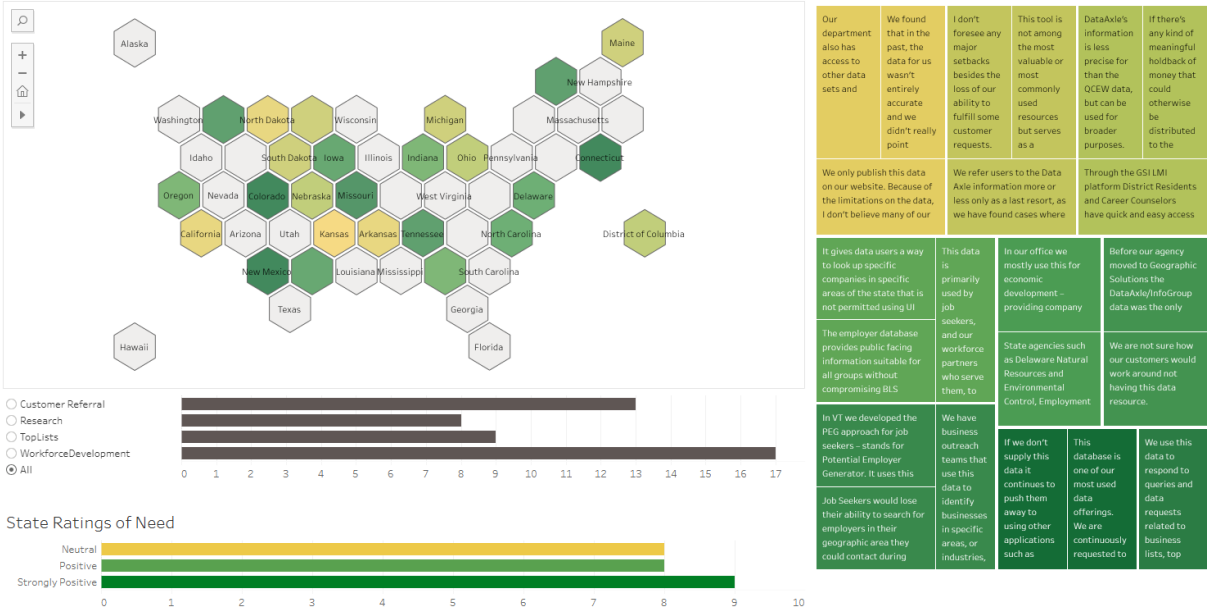
Communication about the deliverable happens throughout the year. Sometimes states will want assistance improving their process or researchers have questions about the data source, and documentation can often be improved.

Employer Database

States are regularly called upon to answer questions about local employers, but state and federal data privacy laws often make that difficult. The ARC procures a privately sourced dataset – the Employer Database – to allow states to answer common queries without running into issues of confidentiality. The most recent supplier of the data was DataAxle. Outreach to states established that, as a supplement to established labor market information data, access to this type of comprehensive employer dataset continues to be valuable.

- Workforce Development Partners rely heavily on the details available about specific employers
- Because of suppression considerations, the data allows for release of more detail on individual employers than other sources
- Depending on how it's published, the data can be one of the most used data sources in LMI toolkits
- Ongoing concerns with accuracy prevent it from being more than supplementary to LMI datasets

Use of the Employer Database by States - Oct 2024



Full content available here.

Real Time Analytics and Job Posting Analysis

States increasingly seek real-time labor market information to address local workforce questions. However, the many available data sources vary in cost, scope, and usability, making direct comparisons difficult. To better understand these options, ARC members have engaged in collaborative research projects.

New and Emerging Occupations (NEO) Research

Funded by the BLS, ARC members from North Carolina and Minnesota collaborated on an effort to explore changes in occupations that are not confined to existing Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) structures. Both states used job postings data for analysis, but North Carolina used Lightcast and Minnesota used National Labor Exchange (NLX) data. Besides the insights into the occupations themselves, the research provided use cases and insights into the data platforms and the strengths and weaknesses of the various platforms.

The reports are available here:

Analysis

Workforce Report

NC Spreadsheet

MN Spreadsheet

National Labor Exchange (NLX) Research

The NLX Research Hub, managed by the National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA), provides states with access to detailed job postings data at no cost. Unlike private-sector alternatives, NLX data includes a broader mix of industries and employer sizes, thanks to its integration with state job banks. While its large scale presents challenges in analysis, it offers granular and transparent insights into hiring demand, making it a valuable resource for workforce research.

ARC members in Minnesota have deep expertise in evaluating and improving the usability of NLX data for state labor market applications. Current projects include:

- Improving resources available for time series analysis
- Methods for adding structured variables around tasks
- Testing new formats and products

Findings from this work are shared through NASWA conferences and reports to the Department of Labor, helping states make the most efficient use of real-time labor market data in workforce planning.

Collaboration

State labor market information offices face common challenges in managing and analyzing workforce data. By working together, states can reduce duplication of effort, streamline processes, and adopt best practices that improve efficiency. Collaborative initiatives ensure that states make the most of available resources while maintaining high-quality labor market information that supports local decision-making.

The following activities help states share expertise, coordinate technical improvements, and enhance the usability of workforce data systems. Through structured meetings, dedicated communication platforms, training, and up-to-date contact networks, these efforts enable states to share efficiencies and best practices to ensure that labor market data remains accurate, accessible, and cost-effective.

ARC Meetings

A major current and historic role of the ARC grant is to bring together people from state Labor Market Information offices to talk about the challenges facing them and brainstorm ideas about how to address these challenges. This serves several purposes; it gives an opportunity for collaboration between people who do similar supporting data work in state offices; it allows upcoming concerns to be elevated to Department of Labor leadership to increase visibility; and it brings tasks that can be done centrally for the benefit of all states to the attention of ARC staff to help direct and prioritize how our time is spent.

In 2024 and going forward, the ARC expanded these meetings to include more consistent virtual meetings between in-person events.

- Twice annually open invitation meetings for LMI Directors are being held to talk about issues that are of interest outside the group
- Outreach to quarterly Regional Workforce Information Grant Director meetings is being conducted by participants
- Monthly virtual meetings for ARC members are being held, rotating through topics

Forum

The ULMITA team, which develops and supports LEWIS and Projections software, also maintains a secure communications platform that enables state users to share methods, resources, and best practices. To enhance collaboration, the team recently overhauled the long-established Projections Forum, expanding it to include LEWIS and ARC topics. State users are finding the Forum to be a valuable tool.

- Immediate peer-to-peer connections on state and regional labor market topics
- Elevating local concerns in a shared, visible space
- Providing a searchable knowledge base, making discussions accessible to more users than one-on-one communication allows
- Ensuring continuity despite staff turnover or local email policies

The ARC and LEWIS forums continue to grow as essential resources, helping states efficiently collaborate and find solutions to common workforce data challenges.

Training

In 2024 there were two dedicated LEWIS trainings held, a large online course over the summer and an advanced in-person training in the fall. Additionally, LEWIS staff attended OEWS and Projections national conferences and presented on the software.

A training on the topic of WID 3.0 implementation was held virtually, with more than 100 participants.

Contact list updates

Since its creation in 2020 by data validators, the technical contact list has been consistently maintained and regularly updated. By keeping this contact network current, states benefit from more effective communication and collaboration, helping them stay engaged with evolving technical and policy developments.

This list serves as a key resource for:

- Coordinating communications on LEWIS and WID updates, ensuring that state users stay informed
- Enhancing outreach by providing the Department of Labor with an up-to-date channel for sharing information on workforce data initiatives

WID Database Structure

A well-structured and consistent database framework is essential for states to efficiently manage labor market data and produce reliable insights. The Workforce Information Grant (WIG) supports database expenditures to ensure that states have a standardized approach to organizing and maintaining workforce data. This structure, known as the Workforce Information Database (WID), provides a common framework that enables consistency across states, making data integration, reporting, and analysis more efficient.

The ARC plays a key role in defining and maintaining the WID database structure, ensuring that it evolves to meet changing data needs and technological advancements. This work includes refining table definitions, updating field names for clarity, and incorporating feedback from states to improve usability. By adhering to a shared structure, states reduce duplication of effort and ensure that their data systems remain compatible with federal reporting requirements and national workforce data initiatives.

Beyond standardization, the WID structure supports collaboration and resource-sharing among states. A common database framework allows states to exchange methodologies, leverage centralized tools, and adopt best practices without having to develop custom solutions independently. This consistency also helps external partners—including researchers, policymakers, and software developers—access and interpret workforce data more easily, leading to more effective use of labor market information at the local and national levels.

The ARC continues to support states in implementing and maintaining the WID structure, providing guidance, technical assistance, and updates that help states maximize the efficiency of their workforce data management. By maintaining a structured, adaptable, and shared approach to data management, states can focus on delivering accurate and actionable labor market insights while making the most of available resources.