

What is ALMIS?

by James Barnes

ALMIS is the acronym for America's Labor Market Information System, an initiative spawned by the Employment and Training Administration of the U.S. Department of Labor in the mid-1990's. The ALMIS umbrella covers a wide variety of activities, and it can get confusing at times as one tries to sort out the many elements of this initiative.

To begin a discussion of ALMIS, we will focus on four major groups of activities: research and development, workforce information grants to state labor market information departments, the Occupational Information Network, and the Career One-Stop System. These four groups cover the wide array of ALMIS efforts and demonstrate its far-reaching effects.

Research and development is essential to increasing our understanding of labor market information and our ability to make it useful to our customers. ALMIS includes six consortia that all play important roles in research and development. These consortia are the ALMIS Database Consortium, the ALMIS Employer Database Consortium, the Projections Managing Partnership, the America's Job Bank (AJB) Transaction Analysis Consortium, and the Labor Market Information (LMI) Training Institute.

These consortia are made up of state and federal workforce agency employees who have expertise in the various areas. The ALMIS Database Consortium is responsible for determining what goes into the standardized ALMIS database that each state maintains. This body has to be very deliberate in its work, since even a minor change can have significant impact on the information systems within the states. The ALMIS Employer Database Consortium is responsible for insuring that the states have access to a publishable list of employers along with their contact information. This information is used in many online applications to assist jobseekers or others seeking specific company information, which may be not be available from state workforce agency files for a variety of reasons including privacy issues.

The Projections Managing Partnership oversees the employment projections by occupation and industry. This information is widely used by private and public planners and educational institutions. The AJB Transaction Analysis Consortium is working to find ways to deliver real time information on labor market dynamics based on the transactions that occur on the national job matching system. The LMI Training Institute is the resource for providing training to professionals in the field of labor market information. Additional information on these consortia and other research efforts can be found at www.lmi-net.org and <http://almis.dws.state.ut.us>.

Other activities that support research and development activities under ALMIS include the Job Vacancy Survey Workgroup, Employer Benefits Survey Workgroup, National Crosswalk Service Center,

and administrative records research. These efforts represent leading edge research on topics that are of importance to employers and other customer groups. Often LMI departments will partner with other agencies, local workforce boards, economic development groups, or other entities to conduct this research and to deliver useful, local information.

The Workforce Information Grants to state LMI departments give them the means to provide many specialized products and services. Informational websites and publications, employment projections, training programs, job vacancy and employer benefits surveys, career information, and other endeavors are funded by these grants. Without this support the LMI departments would have difficulty in packaging and delivering the excellent information they collect to jobseekers, employers, the media, and other users.

O*NET, or the Occupational Information Network, represent a wealth of information on jobs as classified by the Standard Occupation Classification (SOC) system. The O*NET Resource Center also has links to other O*NET sites such as the O*NET Consortium, O*NET Online, O*NET Code Connector, O*NET Knowledge Site, and the O*NET Academy. Information on over 800 occupational groups can be found at O*NET Online (<http://online.onetcenter.org/>). This information includes description of the job as well as the knowledge, skills, and abilities that are required to perform the job. Other sites provide information on training and related events, coding assistance, and a forum to share knowledge about the occupational classifications.

A capstone for ALMIS is the Career OneStop System. This website (www.careeronestop.org) is a treasure trove of information for jobseekers and those seeking career counseling. The Career OneStop System can take an individual from career assessment to a national job matching system and to actually locating local offices that offer services. America's Career InfoNet, www.acinet.org, is a great place to begin exploring the world of work and to get additional information if one is considering a job change.

Those persons intent on finding a new job can go to America's Job Bank, www.ajb.org, to register online and post a resume for potential employers to see. At any given time, close to a million jobs are available on America's Job Bank and about a half-million resumes are posted. This service is provided to all citizens at no additional cost, and thousands of people take advantage of it every day. America's Service Locator is the fourth piece of the Career OneStop system and it assists people and businesses with locating the closest career center, where they can get individualized attention.

The scope of ALMIS is tremendous and it has changed the way services to LMI's customers are delivered. It has enabled universal access to career and labor market information, while helping to empower people to conduct their own job search whether they are seeking that first job or hoping to find a new job. It has facilitated getting data and information to business as soon as it is needed and at no additional cost. ALMIS is truly an amazing package of services and information.