

# Older Worker Profile Reports

## ISSUE

The Census Bureau, in collaboration with states under the Local Employment Dynamics (LED) Partnership, published and released sequentially in 2004 and 2005 the first series of Older Worker Profile reports for 12 state partners based on 2002 data. The current series is based on 2004 data and has been released for 27 state partners since 2007. The series is scheduled to close after the reports for the last three states - Alabama, California, and Nevada - have been issued.

Several states, including Nebraska, New York, Rhode Island, and Utah, have indicated interest to be included in the current series. Others have inquired about participation in future Older Worker Profile reports.

## BACKGROUND

- 1. Eligibility.** The LED state partners that were under Regular Production<sup>1</sup> of the Quarterly Workforce Indicators (QWI) for the base year (2004 in the current series) were eligible. Eligible state partners might opt out. The Census Bureau announced the launching of the series for 31 state partners by a press release<sup>2</sup> on June 18, 2007.
- 2. Data Source.** The QWI public-use files<sup>3</sup> for the base year 2004 is the data source for the current series of Older Worker Profile reports.
- 3. Funding.** The National Institute on Aging of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services provided partial funding for the preparation and production of the reports.
- 4. Official Publication.** The Older Worker Profile reports are official Census Bureau publications. As such, they were subject to multiple, extensive reviews when a template report was proposed, as well as when individual state reports were prepared and released.
- 5. Availability.** When a state report is released, the “camera-ready” electronic version of official publication quality is posted at Census Bureau websites<sup>4</sup> along with companion tables for public download. No hard copy is produced separately.

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<sup>1</sup> Defined by Standard Operating Procedure 3110, QWI Experimental Production Process, available at <http://lehd.did.census.gov/led/partnersonly/sop.html> on January 18, 2009.

<sup>2</sup> CB 07-86, Census Bureau Launches Older Worker Profiles for 31 States, available at [http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/aging\\_population/010216.html](http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/aging_population/010216.html) on January 18, 2009.

<sup>3</sup> Produced and released to the state partners and the public according to Standard Operating Procedure 4000, QWI Regular Production Schedule, available at <http://lehd.did.census.gov/led/partnersonly/sop.html> on January 18, 2009. Data are also available by download through the Cornell VirtualRDC.

<sup>4</sup> Available at [http://lehd.did.census.gov/led/library/profiles\\_2007.html](http://lehd.did.census.gov/led/library/profiles_2007.html) on January 18, 2009.

- 6. Collaborative Approach.** The Census Bureau employed a template report approach, meaning that the style, content, and presentation of each report were set to be consistent across states according to the Census Bureau standards and requirements. Content of the current series was extended from the first series based on 2002 data. The template and plan for the current series were presented in the 2007 LED Partnership Workshop<sup>5</sup> for state partners' input and discussion. The state partners were also asked to identify their points of contact for coordination. When the report for a specific state was approaching a release date, the state partner's representative would be contacted to coordinate joint announcement, response to potential media inquiries, and similar logistics.
- 7. Closure of Series.** In November 2007, the Census Bureau notified the remaining state partners scheduled for the Older Worker Profile report that the series would be closed unless there was confirmation of interest and identification of a point of contact. This process resulted in the confirmation that Alabama, California, and Nevada will be the last three states for a total of 30 state partners. North Carolina, while originally scheduled, will not be included in this series of Older Worker Profile reports.

## DISCUSSION

1. The U.S. Senate Special Committee on Aging<sup>6</sup> recognizes the Older Worker Profile reports to be exemplary research that seeks to advance the well-being of older Americans. The Committee plans to compile the research submissions for use "by the Committee and other policymakers to inform aging policy and to serve as a catalyst for continued progress in addressing the most pressing concerns of the nation's older population." This recognition demonstrates the value of the reports to the LED Partnership.
2. Adding state partners to the current series is not practical. It will require the re-start of the time-consuming Census Bureau review process for 2004 data, when more current data are already available<sup>7</sup>.
3. Funding from the National Institute on Aging has been exhausted. The Census Bureau has not committed to full funding of the next series of Older Worker Profile reports.
4. Michigan, which was not eligible to be included in the current series, is preparing to issue its own Older Worker Profile report, merging QWI with other data sources. Arizona is also exploring the preparation and issuance of its own report.

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<sup>5</sup> Held at the Brookings Institution in Washington, DC on February 1-2, 2007.

<sup>6</sup> Recognition of Excellence in Aging Research, available at [http://aging.senate.gov/award/award\\_main.cfm](http://aging.senate.gov/award/award_main.cfm) on January 18, 2009.

<sup>7</sup> Full 2007Q4 QWI are available at <http://lehd.did.census.gov/led/datatools/qwiapp.html>, on January 18, 2009. Release of full 2008Q1 QWI on a flow basis will begin before the end of January 2009.

5. Since public-use QWI files are the data source, any LED state partner or LED data user can produce profile reports not only for older workers, but also younger workers, low-earnings or high-earnings workers, male or female workers, or manufacturing or financial sector workers. This is due to the inherent richness in the QWI and the LED data infrastructure, which can be more fully utilized.
6. If a new series of Older Worker Profile reports will be produced, considerations must be given to improve the current approach. For example, staying with the same base year provides consistency, but reports released in the later stage will be relatively out-dated. If an incremental approach is taken, preparation and review of the reports must be significantly streamlined. In addition, more active contribution and coordination with the state partners is desired to maximize the impact of the reports and optimize the value and recognition of the federal-state partnership.

## **PROPOSED DECISION PROCESS**

Several fundamental issues should be addressed, preferably through the Steering Committee and discussion in the 2009 Workshop:

- Should a new series of Older Worker Profile reports be prepared and issued?
- If yes,
  - How will it be prepared?
  - How will it be funded?
  - How will it be marketed?