Missouri Technical Assistance: Localized Employment Projections

OVERVIEW

The Missouri Economic Research and Information Center (MERIC), part of the Missouri Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development (MDHEWD), is partnering with the Center for Regional Economic Competitiveness (CREC) and the Projections Managing Partnership (PMP) to develop new approaches and processes for producing sub-state employment projections.

MERIC currently produces sub-state industry and occupational employment projections for Missouri's Workforce Development Areas (WDAs). At the same time, MERIC has recognized that some of the current WDA boundaries are so large that they encompass several different areas with meaningful economic differences. The immediate goal of this engagement is to build MERIC's capacity to develop, test, document, and ultimately sustain a methodology for producing employment projections for smaller, more economically meaningful sub-WDA geographies, while maintaining existing WDA-based projections. PMP also plans to generalize the lessons, processes, and tools developed through this project so they can also be leveraged to support similar efforts to adjust projections geographies in other states.

PARTNERS

- **MERIC** — Missouri's labor market information agency. MERIC will provide dedicated staff, coordination, and prioritization to ensure the success and sustainability of the project.

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

1. **Define new sub-state geographies.** Identify and assess sub-state geographies that better reflect the state's regional economies while continuing to meet the needs of Missouri workforce, education, and economic development stakeholders.
2. **Develop and test a process for re-defining substate projections areas.** Develop, test, and document methods for producing industry and occupational employment projections for regions smaller than current WDAs, including approaches for addressing data availability, suppression, reliability, and integration with MERIC's existing projections products and processes.
3. **Build MERIC's long-term technical capacity.** Strengthen the ability of MERIC projections staff to produce, maintain, update, and communicate localized projections, including the use of R to make the sub-state projections process more efficient and replicable.
4. **Document and disseminate lessons for broader applications.** Capture lessons from Missouri's methodology development and implementation and translate them into tools, templates, presentations, or other resources that can inform similar localized projections efforts in other states.

NEXT STEPS

- Develop criteria for selection of new sub-state geographies.
- Identify sub-state geographies for testing.
- Test/evaluate geographies, including QCEW aggregation and staffing pattern development for a targeted selection of sub-state areas; evaluate suppression impacts.
- Trial production of sub-state projections with new geographies.
- Develop product ideas/templates using new data.