

Staff Recruitment and Retention for LMI in Washington State

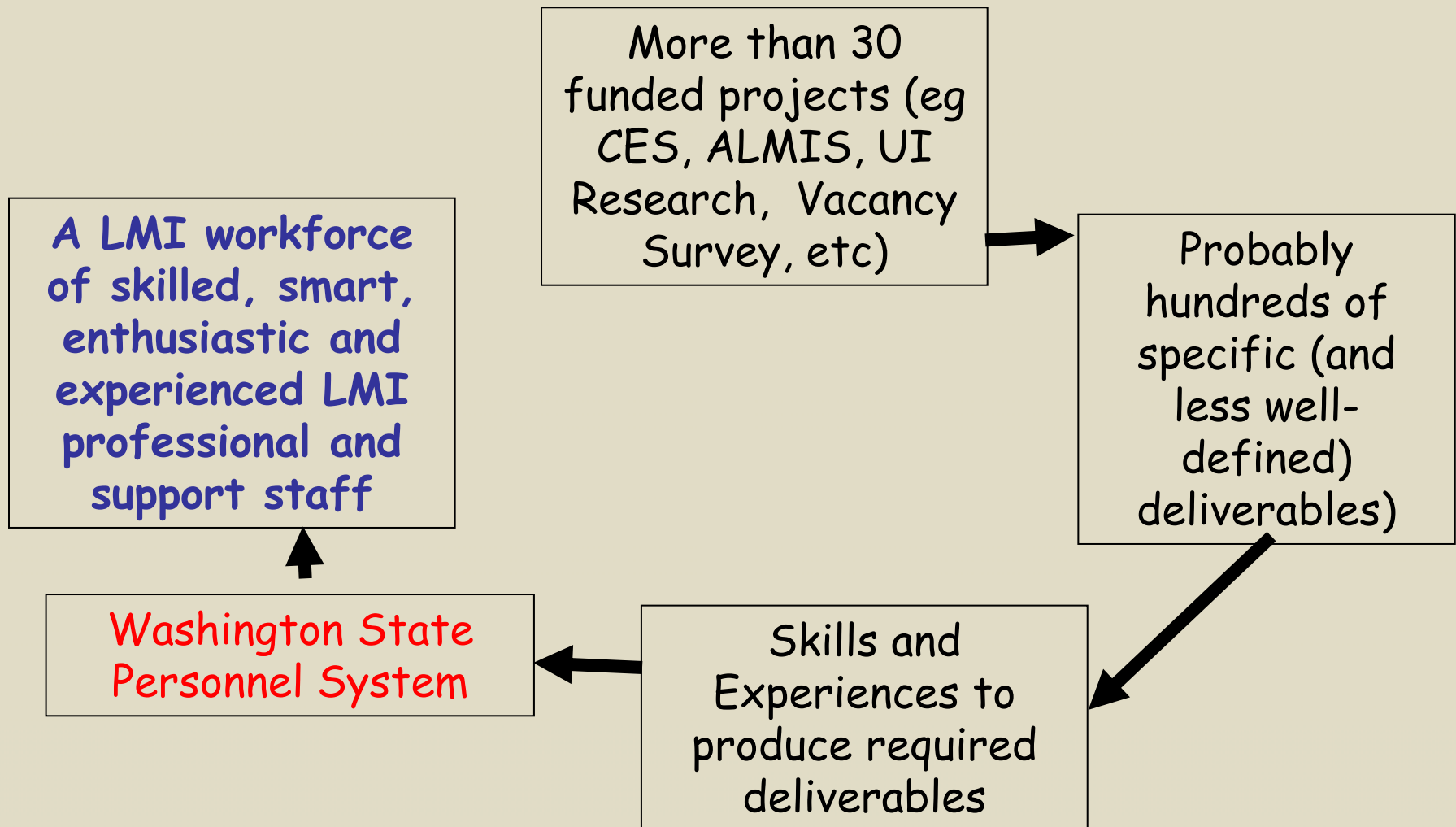


Labor Market and Economic Analysis Branch
Greg Weeks, PhD
Director



**Employment
Security
Department**
WASHINGTON STATE

The Challenge



Staff Recruitment and Retention

1. Support staff are easier to recruit and retain than professional staff.
2. In WA, professional staff are Research Analysts (RAs). Economic Analysts (EAs) or IT professionals (mostly applications specialists)
3. Because the state personnel system is very permissive concerning what is a closely related degree to economics for EAs, we add a requirement of undergraduate econometrics and intermediate micro and macro economics. That way we have more assurance that new EAs know something about economics.

Recruitment

1. Advertise widely for professional position (AJB, NABE, JOE, local economist clubs) for economists, Newspapers and electronic media for others.
2. Every 6-9 months, I send a personal email to about 75 professors, deans, department chairs and others who I know (or know of) who deal with graduate and undergraduate economics students. I tell them we have openings for economists, describe some of the positions, and ask them to communicate this message to their students. This has been a fruitful endeavor.

Hiring Process

1. Work with Partners wherever possible to get their input on position requirements, position description, and interviews.
2. We have done this in numerous successful recruitments in the recent past - the Seattle and Spokane Regional Labor Economists and our Chief Economist.
3. Interviews are structured with scripted questions and a freeform follow-ups on experience, training, and "What would you bring to an LMEA potluck?"

New Hire Orientation

1. This is an area in which we do a poor job.
2. At present it is largely left to the individual manager, and the quality of the orientation varies with the manager, and how busy they happen to be.
3. We are hoping that our systematic review of data systems will lead to a better orientation process. It clearly needs attention.
4. We do send analysts to LMI institute and BLS training when available as part of their orientation and training within our shop.

Staff Recruitment and Retention

Retention

1. Within the constraints of the work that needs to be done, we try to cross-train and develop our existing talent to do new things and learn new methods, and processes.
2. For example, one of Evelina's young economists had taken on the data collection for the benefits survey and has now become our in house expert on conducting surveys. Thus, he gets to go to meetings to discuss new projects and negotiate what we can do for what price.
3. We are also exploring the possibility of reputable online economics masters degrees. If anyone knows of a place where this happens, please let Evelina or myself know as we are very interested. We find a higher level of economics training is very helpful in understanding and using the employment statistics we all produce.



Employment
Security
Department
WASHINGTON STATE



Thank You.

Greg Weeks, Director

(360) 438-4804

gweeks@esd.wa.gov