

# OKLAHOMA COMMERCE DEPT. PROFILES WIA REGIONS WITH EMSI

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*How can leaders in Oklahoma’s workforce system better identify and understand local economic trends? That question was a driving force behind the state Department of Commerce crafting economic profiles of each region using EMSI’s economic and workforce data. The well-received reports are just one example of state researchers across the country turning to EMSI for data and analysis—even amid major budget crunches.*

## SITUATION

Before last year, the [Oklahoma Department of Commerce](#)—the state’s primary economic development entity—worked with a local university to conduct labor studies based on surveys of state residents and other primary data research. The reports were helpful but used a methodology that was rapidly growing outdated.

So when Deidre Myers, Director of Research and Economic Analysis at the Commerce Department, and her colleagues started using [EMSI’s Analyst](#), a labor market data analysis tool, they saw the potential to create easy-to-read, usable economic profiles for the state’s workforce regions—essentially replacing the old studies.

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**-- KATHIE PRICE,  
SOUTHWEST (OK) WIB**

## CHALLENGES

Oklahoma is divided into 11 Workforce Investment Areas, and each relies on a different subset of key industries. What’s important in Tulsa—a particular type of engineering, for example—might not be relevant to Lawton or Oklahoma City.

With Analyst, Myers was able to quickly break down each regional economy, giving her team easy access to relevant employment numbers using the most detailed industry and occupation classifications. And she was able to frame the data how she wanted—by education level, growth, wages, etc.

“One of the great things about EMSI data is being able to sort by education level,” Myers says. “When you’re dealing with [education] partners ... what we want to know are the postsecondary certificates and higher. That sort or search engine where you can look at those occupations with a postsecondary certificate or vocational award—those types of things—those are powerful for us.”

## OUTCOME

Late last year Myers and her staff finished profiles of six regions, providing up-to-date numbers on the respective areas’ largest and fastest-growing occupations, main industries and employers, commuting patterns, and other metrics. The profiles gave Oklahoma’s local workforce investment boards “the data they need for their programs and to help them work strategically with education and industry partners,” Myers says.

The analysis, for instance, helped the Southwest WIB in Burns Flat refine its list of in-demand occupations that it uses to determine where WIA training dollars should be allocated. Kathie Price, the WIB's Executive Director, explains the usefulness of the data this way: "If you don't know what industries are hiring in the area, your information is totally anecdotal." Price went on to say, "Having EMSI access to multiple data sources in one, easy-to-use application is a tremendous tool for a local WIB."

## RESOURCES AND ARTICLES

To download the economic profiles, go to <http://www.okcommerce.gov/Data-And-Research/Downloads/Workforce-Investment-Area-Economic-Profiles>

## ABOUT EMSI

Economic Modeling Specialists Inc. (EMSI) is a professional services firm that offers integrated regional data, web-based analysis tools, data-driven reports, and custom consulting services. EMSI has served thousands of workforce, education, economic development, and other policy professionals in the U.S., Canada, and the United Kingdom, and the company's web-based Analyst research and analysis tool is used by over 2,500 professionals across the U.S. For more information, call (866) 999-3674 or visit [www.economicmodeling.com](http://www.economicmodeling.com).