CASE STUDY

Perkins V CLNA

IECC uses Analyst to collect and analyze data

COVID-19 IS STILL CAUSING RIPPLE EFFECTS throughout the higher education sphere, but colleges have still been facing tight deadlines for submitting their Perkins V applications, while simultaneously adapting to COVID restrictions. With their Perkins V deadline fast approaching back in June, **Illinois Eastern Community Colleges** was looking to summarize regional data for this year's application and determine the impact of the college system on its region. Using Emsi's occupation and industry reports in Analyst, they not only collected and analyzed data for the CLNA, but also obtained a customized view of the markets surrounding each of the four campuses in the system.

To read the full case study, visit economicmodeling.com/IECC

THE CHALLENGE

Collect region-specific data for each of the four system campuses to fulfill new CLNA requirements and measure the colleges' impacts.

THE SOLUTION

Use Emsi's Analyst tool to create custom occupation tables and industry snapshots to analyze program-market alignment.

THE RESULTS

IECC leadership is equipped with actionable data to meet industry needs, fulfill future CLNA requirements, and better serve students.

CASE STUDY: NOVEMBER, 2020

Perkins V CLNA

IECC uses Analyst to collect and analyze data

By Alex Doyle

- Perkins V legislation is highly beneficial for students and CTE schools alike, but requires a robust Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment for schools to qualify for funding.
- To analyze industry and occupation needs in their regional economy, IECC used Analyst to create growing and emerging occupation tables, as well as industry snapshots.
- These reports made it easy to collect and analyze program-relevant market information for their Perkins application, but also inform ongoing analysis of IECC's regional impact.
- This data also serves a valuable internal role, helping faculty to quickly gather data from one place to streamline program review and development and, ultimately, better serve their students.

COVID-19 IS STILL CAUSING ripple effects throughout the higher education sphere, but colleges nationwide have still been facing tight deadlines for submitting their **Perkins V applications**. Colleges' time is more precious than ever as they gather the data needed for their comprehensive local needs assessments (CLNA) while simultaneously adapting to COVID-19 restrictions.

The CLNA, which needs to be completed every two years, **requires data not only at the state level, but also at the local level**—granularity that can be difficult to achieve under current time pressures. Not only that, but because the CLNA must be completed every two years, colleges are looking for ways to A) get the data they need quickly and B) develop a replicable process they can easily re-use in years when the assessment is due. But in completing the CLNA this year and in the future, colleges will find themselves in a unique position. They can leverage their data sources and analysis processes to position themselves as leaders in their regions, able to identify growing industries and providing new graduates with highly market-aligned programs and certifications.

With their Perkins V deadline fast approaching back in early June, Illinois Eastern Community Colleges (IECC) was looking to do just that: succinctly summarize regional data for this year's application and develop a standard process for doing so in the future, while determining how the college has impacted its region and identifying ways to increase that impact.

IECC is one of only two multi-college districts in the state of Illinois, serving over 6,700 students per year between four campuses. All four colleges in the IECC district—Frontier Community College (Fairfield),

Lincoln Trail College (Robinson), Olney Central College (Olney), and Wabash Valley College (Mt. Carmel)—have received state and national recognition for educational excellence.

Brandon Weger, Program Director of Institutional Assessment & Effectiveness at the IECC System Office, was searching for ways to collect data for their CLNA, but also to show the impact IECC has on its community and highlight the diverse groups IECC serves. Under direction from Amy Dulaney, Director of the Transition Center, who oversaw IECC's Perkins V application process, Weger used **Emsi's Analyst tool** to compile the crucial data needed for the application and expand the ways IECC affects its area. This is what initially attracted Weger to Analyst: it allowed him to not only collect and analyze data for the CLNA, but also to obtain a customized view of the markets surrounding each of the four campuses.

Brandon Weger, Program Director of Institutional Assessment & Effectiveness

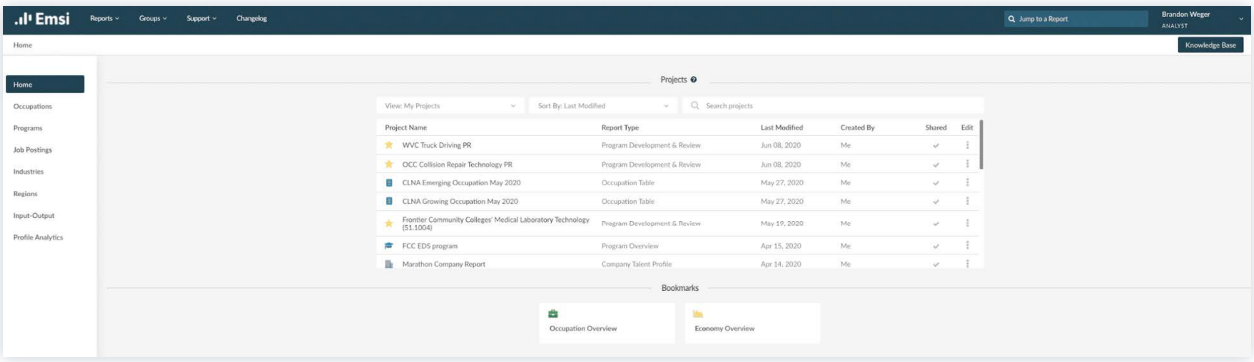
CHALLENGES

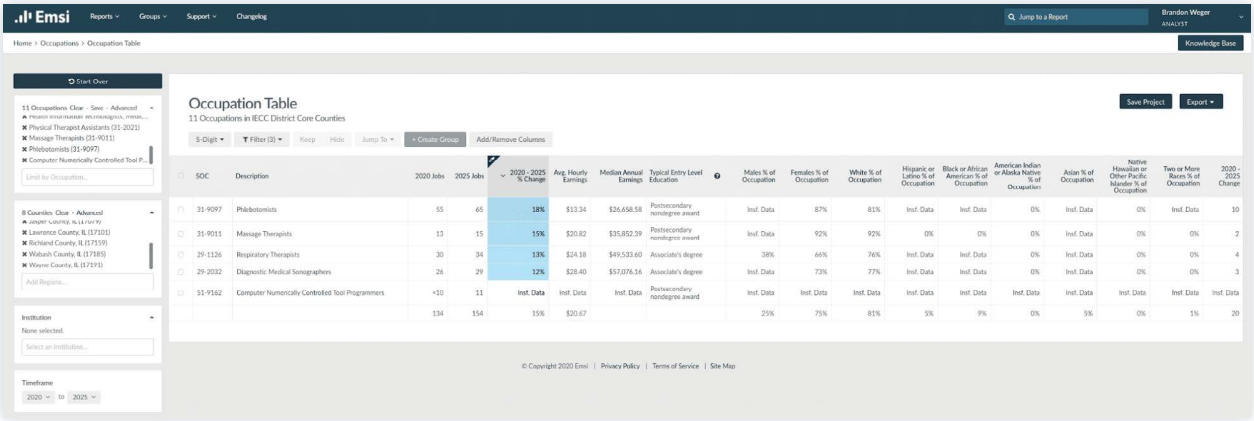
As IECC worked on gathering data for their Perkins V application, COVID naturally made it challenging for all parties involved to connect with other departments and staff to get the information they needed. Teams were unable to meet in person, and faculty were preoccupied with urgent matters related to the rapid transition to distance learning.

"The original plan was to have more facilitated meetings with stakeholders," Weger said. "Which we did do, but we had to limit that because so many people's times and schedules got taken up with COVID-19. The Analyst feature became a tool we heavily relied upon, and we are very thankful we were able to get that done. It was, like I said, a lifesaver, especially because of the pandemic. There was some information that would have taken a lot more man-hours for us to gather ourselves."

Even without the struggles brought on by COVID, gathering the data needed to fulfill Perkins V application parameters can be time-intensive and requires compiling a plethora of resources. Without comprehensive tools like Analyst, colleges have to go to multiple sources to get the information they need—not ideal when you're on a deadline. Weger went into more detail, "The key feature of Analyst is the customization an institution can have by implementing the tool. When it comes down to the very basics, I think Analyst provides the freedom to customize to institutional needs, especially for the Perkins process."

Although Perkins V was the primary motivating factor for Weger to gather data from Analyst, he started looking at broader ways IECC could leverage Analyst to better serve their region. IECC needed to figure out what the region's growing occupations were compared to emerging occupations in order to best serve those markets, so Weger pulled a couple of occupation reports and **saved them as projects** within Analyst so he could go back at any time for further analysis. They also needed to determine which markets were forecasted to grow over the next 5 to 10 years, what occupations had experienced long-term growth, and the demographics of each industry.





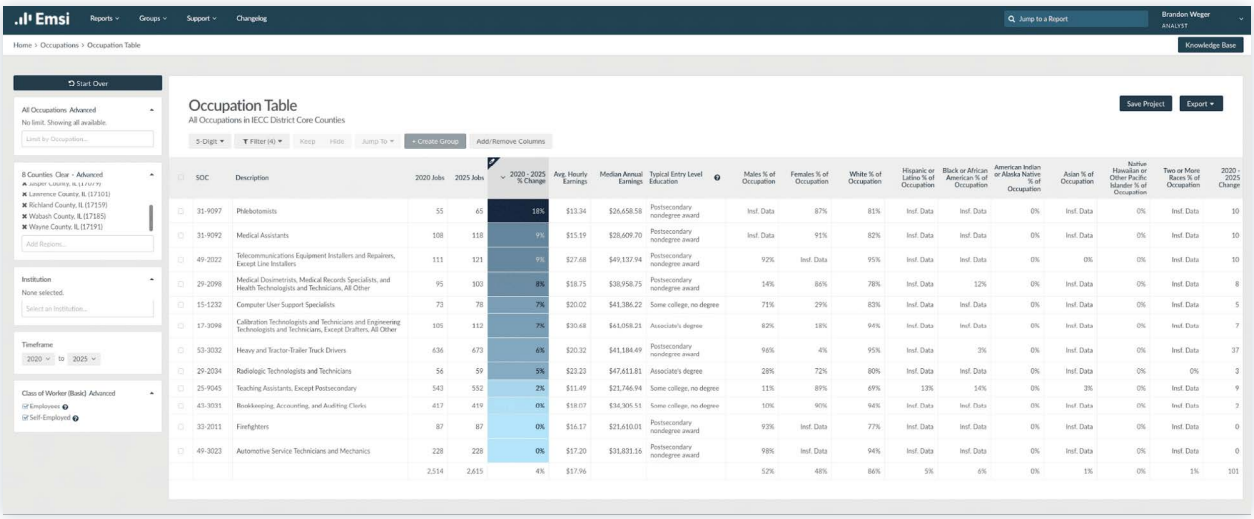
SOLUTIONS

It was imperative for IECC to get Perkins V-relevant data for their local region, as Illinois data often becomes skewed by the greater Chicago area. Weger stated, "I really appreciated getting Emsi data because prior, what we've done for so long with labor market data is use state data, which is reflective of four, five hours north of the Chicago area. It skews the data of the state averages. State wages are not the same in Southern Illinois as Northern Illinois. Or we've used national data, but it doesn't show our specific needs, and it doesn't show us how we can affect our communities. Being able to pinpoint the data into zip codes and counties, it's really shaped and changed our area."

In order to connect programs and academic completions to jobs, IECC looked at CIP-to-SOC connections to analyze the list of completions and establish where demand was for new graduates. "We used the **occupation tables** in Analyst to develop two specialized tables called the CLNA emerging occupation table," Weger specified, "and the CLNA growing occupation table."

Weger examined the occupation tables to determine which occupations were growing or shrinking and how IECC could adjust their course offerings to meet those demands. Program snapshots and occupation snapshots provided him with a look at regional program demand and informed how IECC could enhance workforce development and enrollment. Weger was able to predict which areas would have job growth, examine the make-up of local demographics, and analyze the typical earnings of those demographics.

"We're looking at creating a couple of different programs," Weger said. "Based on the information we received, we were able to say, 'Wait a minute, there are some skillsets here, that if we can provide them with short term certificates while they're taking and completing their GED, they're going to come out of there with a GED and maybe a truck driving CDL.' That starts at about $40,000. Basic welding skills is another one.



Short-term, it gets students out in the workforce and possibly gives them a certification that helps their career. We can get them employed, and they can move from being a high school dropout to someone who received their GED and got a job that is a high-wage area. That's really changed the scope of people's lives."

All of this information informed the Perkins V grant, helps with program assessment and review, and lets IECC continually analyze how they can best serve their local communities.

"That's something that we need to think about," Weger said. "How well we're serving our local businesses. Sometimes we get lost and say, 'Oh, this program would be great to have because we know we're going to get enrollment, we're going to bring people into the institution.' But ultimately, we may know a job isn't going to be inside of our district. We're going to provide services and opportunities for those students, but we can't forget about our local communities."

> "To create a new program degree and certificate program in career and technical, we have to be able to answer questions about our local communities, about their needs in this specific area."

Occupation tables determined which occupations were growing or shrinking, while industry snapshots and tables allowed Weger to find industries affected by economic shifts over the last five years, as well as job growth, demographics, and earnings.

"We couldn't make an adequate decision based on the labor market of our local area [without Analyst]," Weger emphasized. "When I get into talking about program review, there is also program development to consider. To create a new program degree and certificate program in career and technical, we have to be able to answer questions about our local communities, about their needs in this specific area, and we have to be able to show evidence of that."

CONCLUSION

Moving forward, IECC aims to help people who have been laid off or who are looking for a career change. As Weger says, IECC's use of Analyst in addressing Perkins V needs doesn't necessarily involve communicating directly with students—but it does have a direct impact. When you influence a student positively like that, you also have an effect on their entire career and their family. "If you have a program in demand," says Weger, "that can help somebody who got laid off from a job, they can go to that technical program you helped create."

Analyst also serves a valuable internal role, helping staff who are looking for answers but don't want to invest tons of man-hours into a search. "We have what we call our career and technical advisors. We've talked about using this as a way to give them information about their programs. We'd be able to pull customized reports. They're going to want to talk to students about programs, they're going to want to mention, 'Hey, this program might be a good fit for this student,' which we'll see when we develop our program reviews. We will be using this data to justify whether the program is strong, needs redevelopment, or needs to improve."

If you have questions about **Analyst** *or Emsi's other solutions for higher education, please contact us at* **economic-modeling.com/contact.** *We'd love to learn more about the work you're doing and explore how our data can help!*