

## NOVA TEAM OFFERS ADVICE ON LABOR MARKET INTELLIGENCE

At a recent [CCPI-STEM Northeast Regional Network](#) meeting, personnel from [Northern Virginia Community College \(NOVA\)](#) explained how to use labor market intelligence (LMI) to inform grant proposals. LMI includes economic, education, and demographic data from multiple sources.

“A grant proposal is a cross between a research paper and a business plan. It needs to make the case for the project being proposed using relevant and meaningful data. LMI data is required for any RFP [request for proposal] from any funder that emphasizes education and training related to industry needs and employment outcomes,” said Teresa Sweeney, director of grants at NOVA.

Marissa Lema, labor market intelligence analyst, explained that in addition to grant proposals NOVA uses data to inform program offerings, align curricula, monitor labor market demand for graduates, and inform administrators’ and faculty members’ conversations with employers. (See [NOVA’s LMI webpage](#))

To incorporate timely and accurate LMI in grant proposals, Sweeney recommends using data that is less than three years old; reflects the geographic area the project will serve; estimates realistically how many people will be served; and shows the types of jobs that are or will be available, what knowledge and skills those jobs require, and how the proposed project will teach those knowledge and skills.

“Good data is not free. It takes time and effort, and an investment,” Lema said.

Dr. Anne M. Kress, NOVA president and CCPI-STEM Northeast Regional Chair, recommends working with workforce boards and chambers of commerce to share the cost of acquiring and analyzing LMI.

Kress also suggests that smaller colleges focus their pursuit of grants on improving the strongest one or two programs that directly address regional workforce needs.

“Find what your row is and try to work that,” she said, adding “Remember that your grants are not to supplant, but to supplement what you’re already funding.”

Sweeney’s final advice was to use data to address how new initiatives will be sustained when grants sunset: “That’s part of what you have to think about when you’re finding your row, so that it’s not a one-and-done. Because if it’s lip service, that’s what going to happen to that grant—it is a one-and-done—and it’s not building something that’s really adding to your capacity and your strength and your offerings.”

## WHAT IS LABOR MARKET INTELLIGENCE (LMI)?

### Economic

- Employment by industry, occupation
- Wages, prices, cost of living
- Projected employment growth
- Job openings/postings
  - Employers, occupations, industries, skills, education, etc.
- Unemployment (rates, claims)
- Gross regional product

### Education

- Degree awards (regional, national)
- Required levels of education, experience
- Industry-recognized certifications
- Skills and knowledge
- Employment outcomes (NOVA grads, aggregate)

### Demographic

- Population demographics (age, sex, race/ethnicity)
- Worker characteristics
- Income and poverty
- Housing
- Migration
- Commuting patterns

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