

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development

HB Section(s): 3.125

Program Name: Research Team - (MERIC)

Program is found in the following core budget(s): Research Team - Missouri's Economic Research and Information Center (MERIC)

1a. What strategic priority does this program address?

MERIC supports DHEWD's vision of "Every Missourian empowered with the skills and education needed for success" by filling a critical need in Missouri for high quality economic and labor market information to support decision-making. High quality information is essential for employers, job seekers, education and training providers, and other agencies that support Missourians and encourage economic stability and growth. Most directly tied to the department priority of "Raise Awareness of Options", the research and data provided is applicable to a variety of stakeholders as MERIC not only collects and provides a wide array of meaningful data and research, but also makes it easy to access and understand.

1b. What does this program do?

The Missouri Economic Research and Information Center (MERIC) performs data collection, applied research, and reporting of useful information to businesses, policymakers, jobseekers, educators, planners, and the general public to support making data-informed economic, workforce, and career planning decisions. Organizations such as chambers of commerce, community planners, and economic developers use this information for grant applications, promoting Missouri as a location for business expansion and retention, and supporting in-demand jobs.

Research includes: (1) collection, development and analysis of labor market data such as employment, unemployment, wages, and occupational information; (2) production of data and analysis on jobs, career planning, industry and occupation projections, and education and training that employers demand now and in the future; (3) studies of Missouri's industries, targeted sectors, and top occupations in those businesses; and (4) economic conditions and indicators for the state, regions, and counties.

MERIC also provides training, outreach, and support for all Missourians seeking research sources and insights in all of the above areas. With a variety of sources available, data can be difficult to find, understand, and properly interpret. MERIC helps bridge the gap between the data and those who need it.

2a. Provide an activity measure(s) for the program.

	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Projected	Projected
Direct Activities						
Customers in Training/Presentations	2,501	1,585	1,843	1,843	891	1,750
Customer Assistance	996	1,247	1,281	1,281	959	978
E-Newsletter Recipients	2,955	3,420	7,821	9,822	10,018	10,219
Indirect Activities						
Website Page Views	556,043	320,786	397,531	735,844	500,000	500,000

Lingering impacts from COVID continue to limit the number of customer presentations. As more users find the information the need on the MERIC website, the need for direct Customer Assistance should decline. The website page views show the number of pages on the MERIC website (meric.mo.gov) that were visited in the fiscal year. Some of the large growth in FY2022 was driven by a single report that may not have the same impact in future years.

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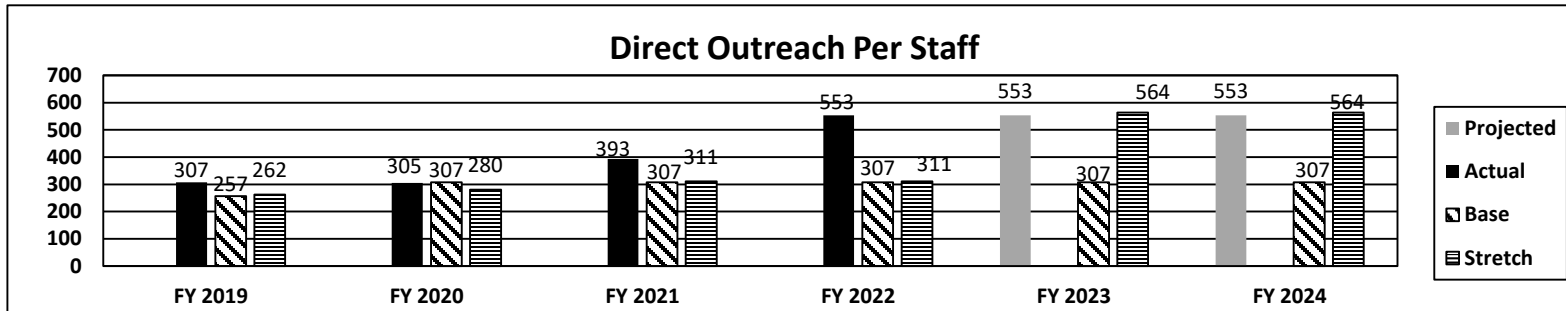
2b. Provide a measure(s) of the program's quality.

	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022*	FY 2023	FY 2024
	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Projected	Projected
How helpful is the information you receive?	79%	79%	74%	81%	81%	81%
How satisfied are you with the assistance?	60%	62%	52%	63%	63%	63%
How satisfied are you with MERIC knowledge?	76%	79%	80%	100%	80%	80%

Customer satisfaction survey questions scored from 1-5 (1-Very Dissatisfied to 5-Very Satisfied). Responses in 4 or 5 totaled for percent of respondents that indicate *Very to Somewhat Satisfied* or *Always to Often Helpful*.

*The FY 2022 customer survey had very limited responses. Work is being done to improve the response rate for FY 2023.

2c. Provide a measure(s) of the program's impact.



- Direct Outreach per Staff: Sum of MERIC reported customers assisted, people trained or in presentations, and delivered newsletter recipients in the year divided by staff level. FY 2020 to FY 2022 increase is due in part to increase in weekly newsletter recipients.
- Calculated Stretch Goal of 2% over FY 2022 actual.
- Baseline is set to FY 2019 Actual.

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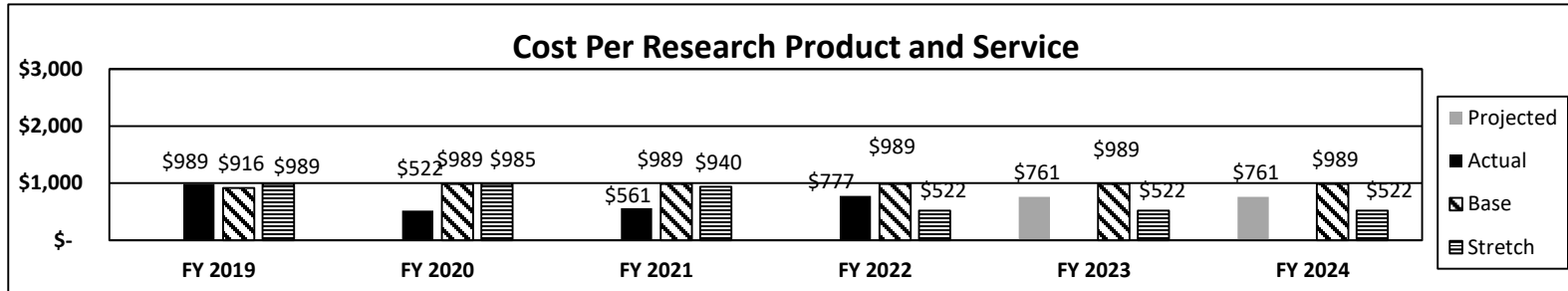
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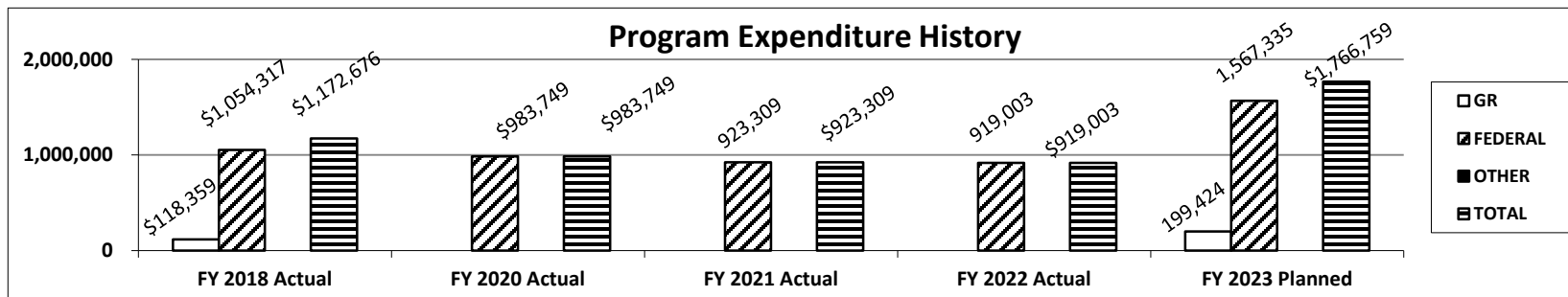
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2d. Provide a measure(s) of the program's efficiency.



- Annual Cost Per Research Product & Service: Sum of MERIC total funding (federal grants and state revenue) divided by sum of new research products, presentations, and services in the year.
- Calculated stretch goal of reduced cost of 2% from FY 2022 actual year.
- FY 2020 and FY 2021 actual were lower due to unexpected changes in budget expenditures and staffing. That trend returned to more expected

3. Provide actual expenditures for the prior three fiscal years and planned expenditures for the current fiscal year. (Note: Amounts do not include fringe benefit costs.)



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4. What are the sources of the "Other " funds?

N/A

5. What is the authorization for this program, i.e., federal or state statute, etc.? (Include the federal program number, if applicable.)

MERIC's federal funding from the U.S. Department of Labor comes from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) and Employment and Training Administration (ETA). The BLS is authorized to collect labor market information pursuant to the 1884 statute (29 USC 1), an Act to Establish the Bureau of Labor, as amended. Section 14 of the Wagner-Peyser Act (29 USC 49 f(a)(3)(D)) authorizes the Secretary of Labor to reimburse the States to provide data for national statistical programs. In addition, both BLS and ETA cite the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 which amended the Wagner-Peyser Act by adding a new section 15, "Employment Statistics," which authorizes the Secretary of Labor to "...oversee the development, maintenance, and continuous improvement of a nationwide system of economic statistics..." as authorization for their programs.

6. Are there federal matching requirements? If yes, please explain.

N/A

7. Is this a federally mandated program? If yes, please explain.

This program is partially federally mandated. The BLS uses a cooperative agreement to fund cooperative statistical data collection programs, pursuant to the Federal Grant and Cooperative Agreement Act of 1977 (31 USC 6301-08). The specific statistical programs and program requirements funded through this Collective Income Group Cooperative Agreement are described in ongoing work statements with the states. In a similar fashion, ETA instructions for use of its funding are detailed to states in the annual Training and Employment Guidance Letter for the Workforce Information Grant to States.

However, the federal mandates associated with this program detail only a limited portion of the actual work activity and services provided. The program also provides for state-specific research needs, leveraging the unique access to data provided by the federal mandates. Types of state-specific support include economic research for recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, critical research support in the state's effort to be the Best in the Midwest, and research assistance to legislative offices and other state-funded agencies in support of their missions.