In this difficult economy, managers need to take advantage of all available information when making changes in their business models. Many companies that did not lay off employees during the recent recession, but instead allowed their workforces to shrink through normal attrition, may now find that their occupational staffing ratios need adjustment. Staffing patterns are a key component of the New Mexico Department Workforce Solutions occupational forecasts that will help accomplish this goal. Along with other labor market information, such as wages and job descriptions, staffing patterns can help provide justifications for changes.

Staffing patterns can be looked at from either an industry view or an occupation view. On the industry side, they provide information on the ratio of a particular occupation to total employment. For example, the staffing pattern for the accommodations sector in New Mexico has maids and housekeeping cleaners at around 32 percent of total employment and hotel, motel, and resort desk clerks at around 20 percent (see table).

Comparing your own staffing pattern to the industry as a whole can provide an idea of your businesses priorities. The occupation view helps to determine which industries hire particular occupations. For instance, the industry with the highest estimated employment for maids and housekeeping cleaners in New Mexico for 2008 was the accommodation sector, at 56.6 percent of the total employment. The next largest industry for this occupation was private households, with 7.8 percent, followed by hospitals, with 7.6 percent of the total employment.

The staffing patterns are obtained primarily through the Bureau of Labor Statistics’ Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) survey. The OES program surveys 1,900 employers per panel across all industries twice a year. Wage estimates and staffing patterns are produced based on six consecutive panels of data. The staffing patterns are then utilized in employment projections. Details on methodology are available through the BLS at http://www.bls.gov/emp/ep_projections_methods.htm. Because these are BLS data, staffing patterns are available at the national level, as well as for other states. In New Mexico, staffing patterns are provided for the state as a whole and for the four local workforce investment areas. Staffing patterns will be updated this fall with the 2010-2020 long-term projections. National staffing patterns are available at http://www.bls.gov/emp/ep_table_108.htm (industry employment by occupation) and http://www.bls.gov/emp/ep_table_109.htm (occupation employment by industry) New Mexico staffing patterns are available at laser.state.nm.us (see Workforce Information Tip below).

**Workforce Information Tip**

How can I use the New Mexico Workforce Connection to find labor market information on a specific occupation to write a job description and to justify changes in my business plan for adding or modifying this position?

In this example, suppose you are in charge of a unit at a hospital that employs occupational therapist assistants and aides, and you want to recommend some changes to staffing levels. You know that your business manager is going to want some justification. What statistical information is available to help you?