

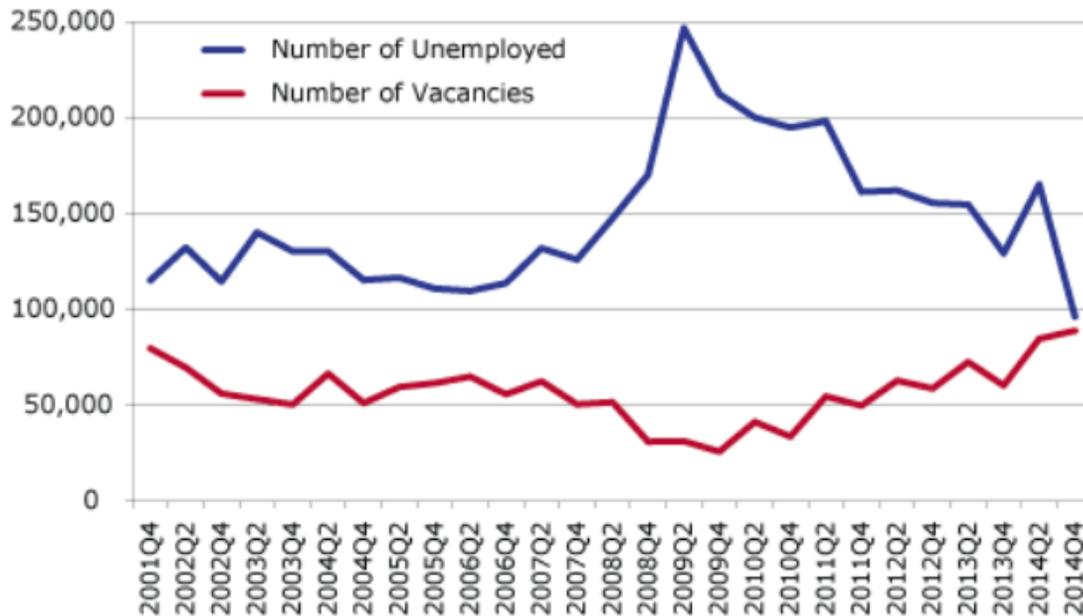
## Job Vacancy Survey

This effort is already underway in Michigan, where the Office of Management and Budget conducts a survey of employers to determine current job vacancies, and in Minnesota, where such a survey has been done for several years. This snapshot in time provides a number of benefits:

- Human resource managers and employers can better understand what others are looking for in the marketplace, which can make the market work a little better.
- Colleges can better understand the current needs in the market place and thus better plan their course offerings to meet those needs.
- Policy makers at the state and local level can use the information to better plan job training offerings.
- Unions might be better able to manage the growth of apprenticeship programs.
- Potential workers can use it to better do their career planning.

While the survey itself typically contains no forecasting for future job openings, it does ask whether job offerings are for expansion or replacement, which allows some greater understanding of the market dynamics. It can also be combined with other demographic and job search information to increase the understanding of the market.

### Minnesota Job Vacancies and Unemployed Workers by Quarter



**Figure 1. Minnesota Job Vacancy Survey**

If the survey was institutionalized and carried out on a regular basis, it could also provide some insights into the job market. Minnesota has done this. Figure 1 shows the highest-level view from



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this survey. They also provide a series of data tools that allow the user to look at information at a more detailed level.

In both Michigan and Minnesota, the survey is done on a total jobs, all-industry, basis. One option, which would make the survey more useful for transportation while reducing the costs for states just beginning the effort, would be to provide a more precise focus. For example, a survey might look at job openings in the skilled trades area.

Carrying this to the regional level would require a partnership between the employment information agencies of each of the states. It would require coordinating the content, timing, and publication of a survey. Since each state would carry out its survey in a statistically valid manner, there would be no need to coordinate on such issues.

Unfortunately, no regional organization of workforce information agencies currently exists, so it would require an ad hoc effort to coordinate across state lines. State DOTs, other transportation agencies, and industries could and should be advocates for such a survey, but they should not be a funding source for it. This ad hoc approach and the need to find funding are the two major obstacles to making this a reality.

Completing the survey is about a nine-month process, so a decision to move forward would have to consider that timeframe.