

Wage Record Interchange System Advisory Group May 15, 2008 Conference Call Minutes

Convening and Welcome

A conference call of the Wage Record Interchange System (WRIS) Advisory Group (AG) was conducted on May 15, 2008. The meeting was hosted from the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) national office, with ETA participation by John R. Beverly, III, Administrator of the Office of Performance and Technology (PROTECH); Karen A. Staha, Director of the Division of Performance Accountability, PROTECH; Greg Hitchcock, Team Leader of the Division of Performance Accountability, PROTECH; and Lois Zuckerman, Office of the Solicitor. On May 8, 2008, in accordance with Section VII of the WRIS Data Sharing Agreement, John Beverly sent notice of the conference call via e-mail to the WRIS contacts identified by the participating states. Karen Staha convened the conference call at 2pm.

Following a welcome by Karen Staha, Greg Hitchcock conducted a roll call of the participating AG members, who introduced themselves and their colleagues. Thirty-six states and the District of Columbia participated in the conference call.

John Beverly welcomed participants and stated the purpose of the call was to lay foundations for a face-to-face meeting of the AG in conjunction with the Workforce Innovations conference in New Orleans in July. There, AG members will work on the development of a business protocol to ensure the AG is organized to conduct business immediately and effectively. Mr. Beverly indicated he looked forward to working with the AG in assuring the confidentiality of the WRIS data and in managing the WRIS as an invaluable performance reporting and management tool. Mr. Beverly also referenced the establishment of the AG as a method to ensure that the management of the WRIS was firmly rooted in a partnership between the states and ETA. He noted that the AG offers a means for the states to collectively provide advice to the Assistant Secretary for Employment and Training on major policy and operational issues affecting the WRIS. Mr. Beverly indicated that the Acting Assistant Secretary and the Deputy Assistant Secretary plan to participate in the AG meeting in New Orleans. He reiterated the requirement that representatives of the AG must be state employees.

Issues and Content Surrounding an Advisory Group Charter

John Beverly outlined a series of questions for AG consideration in drafting the business protocol/charter. He indicated that when the questions, and others, are answered to reflect the preferences of the AG, they should be documented in a WRIS Advisory Group charter. He expressed his expectation that a key outcome of the AG's New Orleans meeting would be consensus regarding the key provision of the charter. The questions included:

- Who should have primary agenda-setting responsibilities? Should the AG elect officers, and, if so, what should be the roles and responsibilities of these individuals?
- How should the process of decision-making and proposing recommendations be managed? Should business be conducted in accordance with the principle of "one state,

one vote?” Will proxy voting be authorized when a state’s representation is not available to cast a vote? Which issues would require a vote and which issues might be decided some other way?

- Should the meetings of the AG be open to the public? If so, how should public notice be rendered?
- Should the charter permit organization of *ad hoc* and standing committees? What committees are needed? How would membership be determined? How should the roles and responsibilities of standing committees be determined?

Mr. Beverly invited questions and discussion from participants on the call. Questions, comments, and discussion items are included in the following tables. Additional comments/responses from John Beverly or Karen Staha, to certain issues raised, are included in the right-hand column:

Content Questions, Comments, and Discussion	Responses from ETA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What constitutes consensus? • Does disagreement among states suggest resorting to an amendment process, or does an issue for which there is significant disagreement “just die”? • Consensus on legal provisions will be more difficult. 	<p>We have a detailed process for handling issues within the Data Sharing Agreement (DSA). The DSA has methods for dealing with some problems, but not others. We have to decide where the DSA has preempted the field and where the AG must decide what to do. We must agree on an ad hoc method to make decisions on how to operate which can include formalizing the process, if necessary. We will adopt a procedure for drafting the charter. We will have to determine a way to agree on the provisions. ETA will draft a brief protocol on how the AG will make decisions on areas for inclusion in the charter for AG consideration. The draft protocol will be distributed prior to the New Orleans meeting.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request to see information on: 1) communications plan, how e-mail and Web sites will be used to disseminate information; and, 2) how will the AG be developed, handled, and maintained. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has ETA established a Web site to post documentation for others to review? • Suggestion to use free forum Web sites. One member created a WRIS forum online last year while waiting for the 	<p>A workspace would be in the scope of ETA’s Secretariat function. The budget does not allow ETA to pay for travel, but ETA has tried to minimize travel by scheduling only two in-person meetings per year. The DSA provides for the use of</p>

<p>Advisory Group to be formed. He suggested it would be good for members to share views on WRIS topics, e.g., what other states are doing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Another member pointed out that many state agencies employ anti-surfing software to block such forums. 	<p>conference calls and for AG meetings to be scheduled in conjunction with other meetings to allow for leveraging state travel resources. ETA acknowledged the potential value of a forum as a way to share information. ETA's existing Web site for WRIS may provide a possible solution. (http://www.doleta.gov/performance/WRIS.cfm) Information-sharing is a legitimate use of resources.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did the NASWA WRIS Advisory Committee have a charter or operating procedures so that this group does not have to start from scratch? • Others noted that the NASWA WRIS Committee did not have a formal charter. Members could give feedback on what worked and what didn't. In general, participating states could usually agree on the issues. 	<p>John Beverly will call Rich Hobbie at NASWA and ascertain if he has any lessons learned or procedures for operating such a group.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing data is good, but data must remain confidential, and confidentiality must be kept in mind when establishing the charter. 	<p>Point well taken. Ninety-eight percent of the WRIS DSA is about protecting data. There should be additional guidance in the charter on how to do this. ETA will provide AG members suggestions to achieve affirmation on issues and summarize feedback we heard today along with any feedback from NASWA in the draft protocol mentioned earlier.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will there be a written presentation at the next meeting on the charter? Should we send in charter suggestions by e-mail? 	<p>Yes. Send suggestions to: WRIS@dol.gov.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will counsel participate in the AG meetings? 	<p>DOL's Office of the Solicitor will provide representation, as appropriate.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How many states will be at the New Orleans meeting? 	<p>ETA does not have an official count at this time.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What about training? NASWA had a data confidentiality training process which would be a useful tool. The AG could avoid duplication among states. 	<p>This is a good example of an operating issue the AG could address.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are any pilot programs currently in operation? 	<p>The focus under ETA's administration of the WRIS has been to have all states participating in the WRIS again. The pilot that expanded data sharing to other programs was suspended until the goal of full state participation was reached. This would be a good topic for discussion in New Orleans.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What about a request for adding a state education agency as a PACIA? Is it 	<p>Yes, under the current DSA, data cannot be shared with Education agencies.</p>

prohibited?	
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Administrative, Agenda, and Logistical Questions	Responses from ETA
	AG members wishing to have items included on the New Orleans agenda should send them to: WRIS@dol.gov . ETA will send out a draft agenda before the meeting to ensure the suggestions of AG members were captured.
	Workforce Innovations begins on Tuesday afternoon, July 15. The WRIS Advisory Group meeting opens on Monday afternoon, July 14, and continues through the morning of July 15. The AG meeting will be held at the New Orleans Hilton Riverside; no sleeping rooms have been reserved specifically for the meeting. If AG members have difficulty finding a room, please advise ETA staff who will work with the hotel.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some states have a travel ban. 	It is not clear how many states will be in New Orleans, but some states have travel budget restrictions or current out-of-state travel bans. ETA will look into a conference call line for specific agenda topics to accommodate state representatives who cannot attend. Two AG conference calls and two in-person meetings were projected for the coming year, per the DSA, but these plans were made before travel prices increased significantly and budget constraints became evident.
	The national office continues to update the list of WRIS Contacts and members. The latest information is available on the WRIS Web site: http://www.doleta.gov/performance/WRIS.cfm
	ACS, Inc. staff, represented by Project Director Amanda Gohl and Cynthia Binkley, are available for discussion of technical issues. DTI Associates, Inc. works with the WRIS for confidentiality compliance reviews.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is there a registration fee? Could ETA send a draft agenda for the New Orleans meeting? 	There is no registration fee for the AG meeting. However, there is a fee to attend the Workforce Innovations conference. ETA will forward a draft agenda with the minutes of the AG call to facilitate state travel reservations and arrangements.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where do we send suggestions for topics to be included in the charter/business protocol? 	Topics should be e-mailed to the WRIS administration account: WRIS@dol.gov .
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When will we receive hard copies of the “second-round” amendments? 	They are being mailed directly to the WRIS Contacts. (The WRIS Contacts have also received copies via e-mailed pdfs.)
	If AG members have additional agenda or charter suggestions, please e-mail them to: WRIS@dol.gov .

Conference Call Participants:

AK: Jeff Hadland
AL: Jo Doyal; Ben Barnes
AR: Sandy Monaco
AZ: Tony Strayhand; Del Zahnleiter
CA: Elizabeth Clingman
CO: Angela Pfannenstiel
CT: Roger Therrien
DC: Donna Blair; Susan Gilbert
DE: Robert Clarkin; Heather Comstock
GA: William Carrillo; Janet Jackson
IL: Liz Pinter; Lisa Winfrey
KS: Melanie Manry; Joe Vining; Dave McEachern
KY: Michele Belcher; Kevin Adams
LA: Peter Wright
MA: Robert Ganong; Dawn McElaney
ME: Craig Dawson; Mia Millia
MN: Deb Serum
MO: Clinton Flowers
MS: Dale Smith
MT: Jim Pierce
NC: Michael Hoskins
ND: Debb Scharosch
NE: Mary Findlay
NE: Vicki Leech
NH: Annette Nielsen
NJ: Steve Reenstra
NM: Margarito Aragon
OH: Vicki Maddux; Frances Hersch; Bob Welch; Pat Powe
OK: Jon Eller; Barbara Ramsey
OR: John Glen
PA: Edward Legge; Luke Murren
SC: J. Michael Daniels
TX: Adam Leonard
UT: Michael Medley; Rick Little
WA: Gary Kamimura; Jay Clark
WI: Nancy Bryan; Diane Reynolds; Warren Gordon
WY: Marian Sisneros
ACS: Amanda Gohl; Cynthia Binkley; Martha Hazelrigg
ETA: John R. Beverly, Karen Staha, Greg Hitchcock, Lois Zuckerman (DOL)