

Draft Summary Report of the Conference Call of the Wage Record Interchange System (WRIS) Advisory Group

First Quarter 2009 Conference Call: March 5, 2009

Convened March 5, 2009, from Employment and Training Administration (ETA), U.S. Department of Labor, Washington, DC

Meeting Highlights

Update from John R. Beverly, III, Administrator, Performance and Technology (PROTECH), ETA:

ETA Administrator for Performance and Technology, John R. Beverly, III, shared an update regarding the arrival of the Department of Labor's new Secretary, Ms. Hilda Solis, and the status of ETA's implementation of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Details he reported include:

- PROTECH is reviewing the details of the Recovery Act, recognizing implications for performance measurement and use of performance data.
- Performance reporting will be conducted within the context of transparency and accountability, which are fundamental principles of the Recovery and Reinvestment Act.
- A Training and Employment Notice (TEN 30-08), issued on March 4, 2009, includes additional details and guidance.

Discussion of State Survey for WRIS Access Options:

- Preliminary findings from the survey developed by a work group from Missouri, Oregon, Texas, and Utah were presented and discussed.
- Given that many state laws do not permit the use of wage data for any purpose other than those identified by state statute or regulation, and that amending the Data Sharing Agreement (DSA) to specify additional purposes requires the concurrence of each participating WRIS state, the work group proposes optional "tiers" for wage record access. These optional tiers would be governed by separate signature access agreements among those states that decide to participate in the exchange of wage data for performance purposes for education and other government programs. States electing to participate in an optional tier would not receive access to wage data pertaining to the programs of that tier from any state that is not a signatory to the new tier agreement(s).
- An alternative proposal suggested that additional entities seeking use of wage data secure access to the wage data through their existing state PACIA, which would complete the work necessary to glean the relevant information from the wage data to deliver to its new "client(s)," thus continuing to restrict wage data access only to authorized SUIA or PACIA staff. It was suggested that this approach would be more likely to receive the state support necessary for implementation.
- The work group will review the suggestion and continue to develop its recommendations.

Other Business:

- Member states were encouraged to schedule on-site Confidentiality Compliance Reviews (CCRs) for the latter part of 2009, and for 2010. The focus of these reviews is to provide technical assistance to assure all WRIS members comply with data confidentiality and other security provisions.
- WRIS training opportunities in March and April were announced.
- The WRIS Operator discussed its Technical Report. (E-mailed to the Advisory Group in advance.)