

Draft Summary Report of the Second Quarter 2012 Advisory Group Meeting Wage Record Interchange System (WRIS)

Convened by conference call on June 12, 2012 (2:00 p.m. EDT), from the Employment and Training Administration, U.S. Department of Labor, Washington, DC.

Meeting Highlights:

Welcome and Adoption of Summary Report

- The Second Quarter 2012 Advisory Group meeting was led by Karen A. Staha, Chief, Division of Strategic Planning and Performance, Office of Policy Development and Research (OPDR), ETA.
- The Draft Summary Report of the First Quarter 2012 conference call was adopted.
- ETA's recent Training and Employment Guidance Letters (TEGLs) and advisories are available at: <http://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/>

Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD)

- The LEHD program helps the Census Bureau achieve its Title 13 mandate by leveraging existing survey, census, and administrative data to create a new integrated business and household frame, create innovative data products produced from the new frame, and use the frame to improve other core Census products.
- Integration permits improved public use products and richer microdata for research via the research data centers.
- Quarterly Workforce Indicators (QWI) and OnTheMap are the two public use products produced from the jobs frame. A third public use product, Job-to-Job Flows, is being developed.

WRIS2 Status

- The WRIS2 expanded data sharing initiative now has 23 members. Minnesota and Puerto Rico recently signed the opt-in Data Sharing Agreement.
- The May 2012 WRIS2 report has been distributed to members.
- A map of WRIS2 participants is available at <http://www.doleta.gov/performance/wris2.cfm>.
- In-depth WRIS2 training can be provided by WebEx to any member state that makes a request.

Workforce Data Quality Initiative (WDQI)

- The Workforce Data Quality Initiative (WDQI) has issued award notifications to 12 states for the second round of grants. The states receiving funds are Arkansas, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Michigan, Nebraska, New Jersey, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Dakota and Washington.
- The first round grantees were not eligible to apply for the second round of funding.

- For more information on the second round grantees, visit:
<http://www.doleta.gov/Performance/workforcedatagrants09.cfm>.

WRIS and WRIS2 PACIA and SUIA Training Opportunities

- A WRIS and WRIS2 Town Hall is planned for July.
- Suggested Town Hall discussion topics may be e-mailed to WRIS@dol.gov.
- Training modules can be tailored to meet specific state needs.

Quarterly Technical Report of WRIS Operations

- DDBI data for the fourth quarter 2011 was submitted by 49 states and the District of Columbia. Hawaii and Puerto Rico are testing their SUIA programming.
- Fourth quarter 2011 DDBI data is currently available. First quarter 2012 DDBI data will be online on July 16, 2012.
- In response to state requests, the DDBI schedule has been adjusted for 2012 to accommodate the quarters ending on the weekend.
- PACIAs are encouraged to increase “need-by” reporting dates to at least six business days to allow adequate processing time and lessen the impact on SUIAs. The two weeks before and after a new DDBI is posted have the highest volume.

Additional Business

- Ms. Staha expressed her appreciation to the states that participated in last year’s round of confidentiality compliance reviews: Maine; Michigan; Mississippi; Nebraska; New Jersey; Tennessee and Utah. Seven states have agreed to participate in the 2012-2013 confidentiality compliance reviews.
- The Third Quarter Advisory Group conference call meeting will be held in late September.
- Additional questions about WRIS or WRIS2 can be e-mailed to: WRIS@dol.gov

Draft Summary Report of the WRIS Advisory Group First Quarter 2012 Meeting

The Second Quarter 2012 meeting of the Advisory Group of the Wage Record Interchange System (WRIS) was convened by conference call on June 12, 2012 (2:00 p.m. EDT) from the Employment and Training Administration (ETA), U.S. Department of Labor, Washington, D.C.

I. Welcome and Remarks

Karen A. Staha, Chief of the Division of Strategic Planning and Performance for ETA's Office of Policy Development and Research (OPDR), welcomed the WRIS Advisory Group to the Second Quarter 2012 conference call meeting, introduced ETA staff and briefly discussed the agenda items. In the interest of conserving time for discussion, Ms. Staha asked the Advisory Group representatives to confirm their participation through an e-mail to WRIS@dol.gov rather than conducting a state roll call.

Ms. Staha reported the WRIS and the opt-in WRIS2 initiative are progressing well, and that WRIS2 was implemented fully on May 4. She indicated that the WRIS2 membership currently includes 22 states and Puerto Rico, and welcomed others to consider participation. In response to a question from Ms. Staha, John Glen (Oregon) reported that a WRIS2 request his state submitted in early May was successful, useful data was gained, and Oregon remains pleased with the process.

During the past several weeks, a number of Training and Employment Guidance Letters (TEGL) have been issued to states. The most recent TEGs focus on unemployment insurance, the Workforce Investment Act annual report narratives, the timeline of reporting requirements for this summer and fall, and the early electronic survey data collection of post 9/11 veterans served through the Wagner-Peyser Act. Ms. Staha encouraged those not familiar with the ETA Web site to visit <http://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/> to view the recent advisories and guidance letters that have been released.

II. Adoption of Summary Report for First Quarter 2012 Meeting

Ms. Staha briefly reviewed the Draft Summary Report of the First Quarter Advisory Group meeting held March 22, 2012. The report had been distributed to the Advisory Group for review on March 30, 2012. Jo Doyal (Alabama) made the motion to approve the Draft Summary Report, and Eric Hatfield (Louisiana) seconded. The First Quarter 2012 Summary Report, as distributed, was adopted without objection.

III. Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD)

Kate Louton, OPDR, introduced the guest speakers from the U.S. Census Bureau's Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) program, Rob Sienkiewicz, PhD, Assistant Center Chief, and Erika McEntarfer, PhD, Senior Economist.

Dr. Sienkiewicz explained that the LEHD program seeks to provide high quality labor market information by combining data from state sources with data from federal sources in order to create a longitudinal link to employer/employee data sets. LEHD data is used for variety of purposes including analysis of commuting patterns, transportation pattern planning, and studies of turnover, low-wage work and productivity.

Dr. McEntarfer presented the program's core information and indicated that the LEHD program helps the Census Bureau achieve its Title 13 mandate by leveraging existing survey, census and administrative data to create a new integrated business and household frame, develop innovative data products produced from the new frame, and use the new frame to improve other core Census products. Dr. McEntarfer reported that the challenges facing the federal statistical system include a downsized budget combined with reduced response rates to surveys, which have increased the cost for surveys and data gathering. LEHD addresses the challenge by leveraging existing data already collected by multiple agencies to create new statistical products.

The LEHD infrastructure data is composed of Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) data and state unemployment insurance (UI) wage data. These are linked with Census data that provides demographics and additional firm data not available from the QCEW to create the first ever U.S. National Jobs Frame. From that frame, two public use products are produced: Quarterly Workforce Indicators (QWI) and OnTheMap. The QWI are unique for employment statistics because the ability to link job records with job demographic information creates extremely detailed worker demographics. OnTheMap leverages the link between the employer-employee data to show where employees live in relation to where they work. A third public-use product, Job-to-Job Flows, currently in development, will exploit the ability to longitudinally link jobs over time and allow for examination of flows of workers between jobs, industries and geographies as well as the wage changes associated with the employment changes. The LEHD program is continuing to integrate new data sources to produce new data products as well as improve upon existing products.

Ms. Staha suggested it might be worthwhile to explore how these different data sets could be connected since LEHD is based on the same wage records the Department of Labor uses for performance reporting and it appears that efforts may be duplicated. Ms. Staha noted that each of the states has agreed to share its wage record information with the Census Bureau and raised the issue of the specific state impediments to a state's participation in the WRIS2 initiative, which also shares aggregate wage record information for outcome purposes for other programs.

A copy of the LEHD presentation was distributed to the Advisory Group following the meeting.

IV. WRIS2 Status

Ms. Louton and WRIS2 Work Group Chairman John Glen (Oregon) provided a brief update on the status of the voluntary, opt-in WRIS2 expanded data sharing initiative. WRIS2 was 'live' on May 4, 2012, all state SUIAs are able to respond to queries, and the first WRIS2 report was distributed to members on June 7. A WRIS2 Orientation and Tutorial WebEx was held for member PACIAs and SUIAs before the data exchange system was fully implemented and additional, state-specific, trainings are available for any WRIS2 member.

WRIS2 membership has increased to 23; Minnesota and Puerto Rico are the most recent to sign the Data Sharing Agreement. To date, the members include Arkansas, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Missouri, Minnesota, Mississippi, Nebraska, New Jersey, Nevada, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah and Wyoming. Mr. Glen reminded the Advisory Group that a map of current WRIS2 participants is available at: <http://www.doleta.gov/performance/>.

V. Workforce Data Quality Initiative (WDQI)

Ms. Louton reviewed the award notifications recently issued for the second round of Workforce Data Quality Initiative (WDQI) grants. The 12 states receiving funds are Arkansas, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Michigan, Nebraska, New Jersey, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Dakota and Washington. Information regarding the next steps for states receiving funding is forthcoming. Thirteen states had received funds under the first round of grants: Florida; Iowa; Louisiana; Maine; Maryland; Massachusetts; Minnesota; Missouri; North Dakota; Ohio; South Carolina; Texas and Virginia. The first round states were not eligible to apply for the second round of funding. For more information on the new grantees, Ms. Louton suggested: <http://www.doleta.gov/performance/workforcedatagrants09.cfm>.

VI. WRIS PACIA and SUIA Training Opportunities

Ms. Louton provided an overview of recent and upcoming WRIS training events. A WRIS Town Hall was held in April and included presentation materials from New Hampshire, North Dakota, Oregon, Tennessee, and Texas. WRIS2 technical trainings for member states were presented in March and May.

A WRIS and WRIS2 Town Hall for SUIAs and PACIAs is scheduled for late July. Access information will be provided to the Advisory Group by e-mail in June. Ms. Louton encouraged state representatives to submit discussion topics for the Town Hall through an e-mail to: WRIS@dol.gov.

VII. Quarterly Technical Report of WRIS Operations

Amanda Gohl of ACS/Xerox, the WRIS operations contractor, discussed the quarterly Technical Operations Review, e-mailed to Advisory Group representatives in advance of the meeting. Ms. Gohl provided an overview of the state participants, noting that 49 states and the District of Columbia submitted data for the Fourth Quarter Distributed Data Base Index (DDBI). Hawaii is working to participate fully, and Puerto Rico is preparing for its SUIA testing. Ms. Gohl reported that the volume tracking is continuing to trend as it has historically.

Fourth Quarter 2011 DDBI data is now available online, and the First Quarter 2012 DDBI data will be available July 16, 2012. The full 2012 DDBI schedule was included in the June Technical Operations Review. Ms. Gohl noted that per state requests, the DDBI schedule has been adjusted this year to accommodate quarters ending on the weekend.

Ms. Gohl provided recommendations and methods to reduce pressures on SUIAs. Ms. Gohl encouraged PACIAs to increase their “need-by” reporting date to at least six business days to allow adequate processing time. Ms. Gohl also emphasized that most requests occur during the two weeks prior to the new DDBI posting and two weeks following the DDBI posting. It is important to try to allow for multiple days to receive responses during this heavy volume time period.

In closing, Ms. Gohl suggested representatives coordinate with Ms. Louton or Linda Stevens (CDS²) to schedule a state-specific training or orientation for new staff members.

VIII. Additional Business

Ms. Staha expressed her appreciation to the states which participated in the most recent round of confidentiality compliance reviews: Maine; Michigan; Mississippi; Nebraska; New Jersey; Tennessee; and Utah. Schedules are being completed for the states that have agreed to participate in the 2012-2013 compliance reviews.

In closing, Ms. Staha thanked the Advisory Group representatives for their participation in the Second Quarter 2012 meeting and invited them to e-mail any questions and suggestions to WRIS@dol.gov. The quarterly meeting was adjourned at 2:55 p.m. EDT.