

## **Summary Report of the Fourth Quarter 2010 Advisory Group Meeting Wage Record Interchange System (WRIS)**

*Convened by conference call on December 9, 2010, from the Employment and Training Administration (ETA), U.S. Department of Labor, Washington, DC*

### **Meeting Highlights**

#### **Welcome and Adoption of Minutes**

- Casey Keilty, Division of Strategic Planning and Performance, Office of Policy Development and Research (OPDR), convened the Advisory Group meeting, introduced ETA participants, and provided an overview of discussion topics. Ms. Keilty reviewed the Draft Summary Report of the Third Quarter conference call meeting on September 29, 2010, and called for a motion to adopt, which carried unanimously.

#### **WIA Gold Standard Evaluation (TEN 37-09)**

- The *WIA Gold Standard Evaluation* is the internal name used for the *WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker Program Evaluation (WADE)*, a study that was authorized by the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 to determine the effectiveness of the WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs by examining intensive services and training.
- The study plans to place, on a voluntary basis, 80,000 customers from 30 Workforce Investment Boards in 20 states in a randomized controlled evaluation.
- The study requires the use of UI wage data.

#### **WRIS2 – Data Sharing Agreement Discussion**

- The WRIS2 Work Group revised the draft WRIS2 Data Sharing Agreement, based on the comments made during the October 7, 2010 conference call with Advisory Group members and state representatives and written comments received.
- The draft WRIS2 Data Sharing Agreement is being reviewed by the Division of Employment and Training Legal Services (ETLS) in the Office of the Solicitor. Following the ETLS review, the draft Agreement will be circulated to the states for a final comment period of at least seven business days.

#### **Quarterly Technical Report of WRIS Operations**

- The February 2011 Town Hall will focus on data quality issues, the proposal to expand the Distributed Database Index (DDBI) to nine quarters from eight, and effective uses of the monthly WRIS Matrix Report
- The WRIS Operator will provide its new phone numbers after December 20, 2010.

#### **Regional Performance Forums: 2011**

- ETA will hold five regional performance and fiscal forums during spring 2011 to cover the performance tenants of common measures and the regression model. As soon as finalized, ETA will circulate the dates and locations to the Advisory Group.

#### **Third Round Amendments**

- The final two states have mailed their signed amendments. As soon as they are received, the amendments from all states will be signed by the Assistant Secretary.

#### **WRIS Training Schedule**

- A Confidentiality Compliance and Incident Response WebEx module is scheduled for January 20, 2011.
- A Town Hall for PACIA, SUIA, and IT staff has been tentatively scheduled for February 22, 2011.

#### **Additional Business**

- ETA proposed March 10, 2011 at 2:00 pm (EST) for the First Quarter 2011 Advisory Group conference call meeting.

## **Summary Report of the Fourth Quarter 2010 Conference Call**

The Fourth Quarter 2010 conference call of the Advisory Group of the Wage Record Interchange System (WRIS) was convened by conference call on December 9, 2010 (2:00 p.m. EST) from the Employment and Training Administration (ETA), U.S. Department of Labor, Washington, DC

### **I. Welcome and Remarks**

Casey Keilty, Workforce Analyst, Division of Strategic Planning and Performance of the Office of Policy Development and Research (OPDR), welcomed the WRIS Advisory Group to the Fourth Quarter conference call meeting. Ms. Keilty explained that Karen A. Staha, Division Chief of the Division of Strategic Planning and Performance, had an unexpected conflict and could not participate in the conference call. Ms. Keilty then reviewed the agenda for the call, which had been e-mailed to the Advisory Group and posted on the WRIS Web site, and asked that states indicate their participation in the meeting through a subsequent e-mail to [WRIS@dol.gov](mailto:WRIS@dol.gov).

### **II. Adoption of Minutes of Third Quarter Advisory Group Meeting**

Ms. Keilty briefly reviewed the Draft Summary Report of the September 29, 2010, Third Quarter Advisory Group conference call. The draft had been e-mailed to the Advisory Group on October 27, and was posted to the WRIS Web site and the Advisory Group's Collaborative Workspace; no comments or questions had been received. Gary Kamimura (Washington) moved to approve the draft Summary Report, and Robert Ganong (Massachusetts) seconded. The Summary Report was adopted.

### **III. WIA Gold Standard Evaluation (ETA TEN 37-09)**

Ms. Keilty introduced Eileen Pederson, Federal Projects Officer of the Office of Policy Development and Research (OPDR), to discuss the WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker Program Evaluation (WADE). Ms. Pederson explained that "WIA Gold Standard Evaluation" is ETA's internal name for WADE and is referenced in ETA's Training and Employment Notice (TEN) 37-09, issued April 6, 2010. OPDR has engaged a consortium of contractors to conduct the evaluation, including Mathematica Policy Research (MPR), and Sheena McConnell, MPR's Project Director, joined Ms. Pederson to review the study and the reference materials previously distributed.

Ms. McConnell noted that the evaluation was provided for in the original Workforce Investment Act of 1998. The objective of the evaluation, which will be conducted under the strictest confidentiality requirements, is to determine the effectiveness of the WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs by examining intensive services and training. The contractors have selected 30 local WIA sites in 20 states, with some states having multiple sites. In the summer of 2011, it is planned to begin following 80,000 customers from the 30 sites and track them through 2014. The study will be a randomized, controlled trial in which an individual, upon reaching a certain stage in the receipt of WIA services, will be randomly assigned to one of three groups: a group limited to receipt of core services only; a group limited to the use of core services, or core and intensive services; or, a group eligible for all three services. The two groups limited in receiving services will range between one and eight percent of the total population served by a particular OneStop in a specific local area. At the time of random assignment, each individual will be briefed about the study and will have the opportunity to decline to participate. Surveys will be administered at 15 and 30 months after random assignment. Ms. McConnell indicated the evaluation requires UI wage record data for a time period ranging from the second quarter of 2009 to the fourth quarter of 2014, drawn in two to three extracts. The contractors would like to obtain the UI wage record data through WRIS by negotiating a single memorandum of understanding (MOU). The arrangement would include compensation for the states' expense to retrieve the data. It would also permit data collection from states contiguous to the sites in 20 states to track individuals who receive services in a site in one of the participating states but commute to a contiguous state.

Ms. Pederson and Ms. McConnell responded in-depth to numerous general and state-specific questions raised by Advisory Group members and offered, if requested, to brief state representatives or Advisory Group members. Ms. Keilty asked that Advisory Group members send additional questions about the evaluation to [WRIS@dol.gov](mailto:WRIS@dol.gov); the questions would be transferred to Ms. Pederson and Ms. McConnell.

#### **IV. WRIS2 – Data Sharing Agreement Discussion**

John Glen (Oregon), Chairman of the WRIS2 Work Group, summarized the recent activities and the status of the draft WRIS2 Data Sharing Agreement. Mr. Glen indicated the draft WRIS2 Agreement is under review by the Division of Employment and Training Legal Services (ETLS) in the Office of the Solicitor and will be circulated to the states for a final comment period as soon as the ETLS review is completed.

Mr. Glen outlined the key questions raised during the October 7, 2010 conference call with Advisory Group members and state representatives and the Work Group's response to each concern:

- *Section VII. Operation of WRIS2, Subsection D* – The Work Group removed from the draft WRIS2 Data Sharing Agreement the text: “ETA may also obtain Wage Data for research and evaluation, subject to the same limitations set forth for PACIAs in subparagraph 3 of paragraph C of this Section VII.”
- *Section VI. Responsibilities of the Parties, Subsection C, Paragraph 5* – “Developing and coordinating a process for the distribution of research proposals to the states participating in WRIS2 for consideration, and a method to govern the disposition of the proposals generated by a PACIA. All research and evaluation proposals submitted to ETA must specify the uses to which the Aggregate Data will be put and must demonstrate a direct benefit.” A recommendation was made by a state to formalize a process for submission of research proposals. The research request format would include, but not be limited to: 1) the timelines involved; and, 2) the purpose of the research. Responding to this comment, ETA has developed a reference template, to accompany the formal WRIS2 Data Sharing Agreement, which states may elect to use for research proposal submission.
- A state expressed a concern with *Section VI. Responsibilities of the Parties, Subsection B, Paragraph 6* and *Section VII. Operation of WRIS2, Subsection C, Paragraph 1*, and inclusion of the word “analysis.” Members of the Work Group decided to retain the word “analysis” in the draft WRIS2 Data Sharing Agreement because a Third Party Entity (TPE) that entered into an agreement with a PACIA to produce reports might include within that agreement a request for the PACIA to interpret the data from the aggregate reports, which would fall under analysis or interpretation of the data.

In response to Mr. Glen's request for questions, Eliza Arentz asked if it was known how many states are interested in WRIS2 participation. Mr. Glen referenced a 2009 research study the state WRIS2 Work Group had undertaken that had generally positive replies from 15-20 states. He indicated the Work Group will again research interest after the final comment period for the Draft WRIS2 Data Sharing Agreement closes.

Mr. Kamimura asked if the Work Group had discussed the aggregation rules and whether a set of guidelines would be in the Agreement or would accompany the Agreement. Mr. Glen indicated the WRIS2 aggregation rules and definitions would mirror those in the WRIS Data Sharing Agreement. Mr. Kamimura said he understood that the PACIA would aggregate the data rather than the SUJA and Mr. Glen confirmed. Mr. Kamimura advised that the Washington SUJA was concerned that there might not be a consistent method of aggregating the data throughout the states and indicated he would talk further with Mr. Glen regarding the potential guidelines.

In light of the state time lines for review of the Draft WRIS2 Data Sharing Agreement and the December holidays, members asked if the current draft could be circulated to the states prior to completion of the ETLs review, with the understanding that certain language might require further revision. Mr. Glen agreed the Draft with Section VII.D removed would be distributed.

Mr. Glen closed the discussion by expressing his appreciation to Clinton Flowers (Missouri), Adam Leonard (Texas), and Rick Little (Utah), the Advisory Group members of the WRIS2 Work Group.

## **V. Quarterly Technical Report of WRIS Operations**

Amanda Gohl of ACS, the WRIS Operations contractor, discussed the Quarterly Technical Report, distributed to the Advisory Group and State Contacts in advance of the meeting. During her presentation, Ms. Gohl outlined the schedule for the quarterly DDBI submissions, the Confidentiality Compliance training module offered in late October and again in January 2011, and the Town Hall proposed for late February.

Ms. Gohl noted that the states follow different patterns in how they send wage data requests to other states. Some states submit requests several times in a quarter, while others submit only once per quarter. The number of submittals will affect the percentage matches shown in the monthly Matrix Report. States making multiple request submittals will see higher percentage matches and volumes.

Ms. Gohl closed the presentation by noting that ACS will have new phone numbers as of December 20 and that the numbers would be submitted as soon as they were operational.

## **VI. Regional Performance Forums: 2011**

Ms. Keilty introduced Stan Blazek, Lead Workforce Analyst, Division of Strategic Planning and Performance, to discuss the regional performance and fiscal forums. Mr. Blazek outlined the five regional performance and fiscal conferences/forums to be held in the spring of 2011 and indicated ETA will provide dates and locations to the Advisory Group as soon as they are finalized. The meetings will cover the basic performance tenants of common measures and the regression model. ETA is scheduling the forums within the regions so that state staff members can conserve their travel budgets. As a result of limited capacity, the forums will target only a state-level audience, not a local-level audience.

Dave Pavelchek (Washington) asked for clarification if the referenced regression model was the national regression project, and Mr. Blazek replied in the affirmative.

## **VII. Third Round Amendments**

Ms Keilty indicated the Third Round amendment process is close to completion and that Connecticut and Kentucky have now mailed signed copies of amendments 10-15. As soon as the signed amendments have been received from every state, the Assistant Secretary will execute them and the amendments will become effective. The Third Round has been conducted in accordance with the Data Sharing Agreement's *Section X. Amendment of the Agreement*.

## **VIII. WRIS Training Schedule**

A Confidentiality Compliance and Incident Response training WebEx is scheduled for January 20, 2011, at 2:00 p.m. EST. State PACIA, SUIA, and IT staff who are interested in participating should email [WRIS@dol.gov](mailto:WRIS@dol.gov) with the names of projected attendees.

The next Town Hall for PACIA, SUIA, and IT staff is scheduled tentatively for February 22, 2011, at 2:00 pm EST. The Town Hall will focus on continuing data quality issues, effective uses by

states for the monthly Matrix Report of WRIS exchanges, and consideration of expanding data options to nine quarters rather than eight. Members who have conflicts with the proposed date were asked to send an email to [WRIS@dol.gov](mailto:WRIS@dol.gov).

## **IX. Additional Business**

**First Quarter 2011 Advisory Group Meeting:** The proposed date for the First Quarter 2011 Advisory Group conference call is March 10. Advisory Group members who have a scheduling conflict with the proposed date should send an email to [WRIS@dol.gov](mailto:WRIS@dol.gov) by January 11, 2011 so that alternate dates may be considered.

## **X. Adjournment**

Ms. Keilty thanked members for their participation in the Fourth Quarter Advisory Group meeting and invited them to e-mail any follow-up questions to [WRIS@dol.gov](mailto:WRIS@dol.gov).