

Summary Report of the Second Quarter 2011 Advisory Group Meeting Wage Record Interchange System (WRIS)

Convened by conference call on June 2, 2011 (2:05 p.m.), from the Employment and Training Administration, U.S. Department of Labor, Washington, DC

Meeting Highlights:

Welcome and Adoption of Summary Report

- Karen A. Staha, Chief of the Division of Strategic Planning and Performance for ETA's Office of Policy Development and Research (OPDR), led the Advisory Group meeting, introduced Employment and Training Administration (ETA) participants, and provided an overview of discussion topics. Ms. Staha reviewed the Draft Summary Report of the First Quarter meeting and called for a motion to adopt, which carried unanimously.

WRIS2 Status

- Kate Louton, Division of Strategic Planning and Performance, reported that the WRIS2 Data Sharing Agreement has been submitted for the Department of Labor's clearance process.
- As soon the WRIS2 Agreement is formally approved by the Department of Labor, the Agreement will be available for SUIA and PACIA signatures in the states that wish to participate in the voluntary expanded data sharing initiative. Ms. Louton indicated that a 45-day signature period for states was under consideration.

Workforce Data Quality Initiative Grants

- In December 2010, ETA awarded 13 Workforce Data Quality Initiative grants to states to build, or improve upon, statewide longitudinal databases. The grants totaled \$12.2 million.
- A second Solicitation for Grant Applications (SGA) is anticipated for late fall or early winter 2011; approximately 13 new states will be selected.
- All 13 first-round recipients are also Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems (SLDS) grant recipients, through a similar U.S. Department of Education program which has awarded approximately \$500 million.
- Questions or requests for more information should be directed to Kathryn (Kate) Louton at Louton.Kathryn@dol.gov.

Training and Employment Guidance Letter (No. 5-08) Policy for Collection and Use of Workforce System Participants' Social Security Numbers

- The Training and Employment Guidance Letter (No. 5-08), *Policy for Collection and Use of Workforce System Participants' Social Security Numbers*, provides states with guidance related to collecting and using social security numbers for participants who access Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and other workforce programs' services.
- The TEGL 5-08 may be accessed online at: http://www.doleta.gov/performance/pfdocs/TEGL_0508_Policy_Collection_Use_Participants_SS_Ns.pdf.

Quarterly Technical Report of WRIS Operations

- DDBI data for the first quarter was submitted by 49 states and the District of Columbia. Hawaii is testing its programming and data may be available for the next cycle, beginning July 11, 2011.
- Fourth quarter 2010 DDBI data is currently available online.
- First quarter 2011 DDBI data will be available online July 11, 2011.

WRIS Training Schedule

- The PACIA/SUIA/IT Summer Town Hall WebEx is planned for June 9, 2011, and will focus on best practices for eliminating duplicate records and continued discussions about data quality.
- A Confidentiality Compliance Review and Incident Response WebEx is tentatively scheduled for August 30, 2011.

Additional Business

- As soon as finalized, information regarding the Performance and Fiscal Reporting Webinars will be available on the Division's Web site: <http://www.doleta.gov/performance/>.
- September 22, 2011 at 2:00 pm (EDT) was proposed for the Third Quarter 2011 Advisory Group conference call meeting.

Summary Report of the WRIS Advisory Group Second Quarter 2011 Meeting

The Second Quarter 2011 meeting of the Advisory Group of the Wage Record Interchange System (WRIS) was convened by conference call on June 2, 2011 (2:05 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 2011 conference call meeting. Ms. Staha reviewed the agenda for the call, introduced ETA participants, and asked representatives to confirm their meeting participation through a subsequent e-mail to WRIS@dol.gov.

II. Adoption of Summary Report for First Quarter 2011 Meeting

Ms. Staha briefly reviewed the Draft Summary Report of the March 9, 2011, First Quarter Advisory Group conference call. The draft had been distributed previously to the Advisory Group for review and comments. Eliza Arentz (Pennsylvania) made the motion to approve the Draft Summary Report, and Jo Doyal (Alabama) seconded. The First Quarter 2011 Summary Report was adopted unanimously.

III. WRIS2 Status

Ms. Staha introduced Kathryn (Kate) Louton, Division of Strategic Planning and Performance, who provided an update regarding the voluntary, opt-in WRIS2 initiative. Ms. Louton noted that the WRIS2 Data Sharing Agreement had been submitted for the Department of Labor's formal clearance process by ETA Assistant Secretary Jane Oates. As soon the WRIS2 Agreement has been fully approved through the Department of Labor, the Agreement will be available for SUIA and PACIA signatures in states that wish to participate in the initiative. Ms. Louton indicated that a 45-day signature period for the states is being considered; no objections to the suggested time-line were raised by Advisory Group participants. Ms. Louton emphasized that participation in WRIS2 is strictly voluntary, but indicated she is hopeful that many states would become members of the expanded exchange. In closing the discussion, Ms. Staha noted that work on the opt-in initiative began in early 2009, and she thanked the WRIS2 Work Group members -- John Glen (Chairman), Clinton Flowers, Adam Leonard, Steve Maas, and Rick Little -- for their leadership and continuing support.

IV. Workforce Data Quality Initiative Grants

Ms. Louton provided an overview of the Workforce Data Quality Initiative (WDQI) grants and responded to questions. In December 2010, ETA awarded 13 states with grants up to 1 million dollars, and totaling 12.2 million, to build or expand upon statewide longitudinal databases. The states are now at different stages of the process. All 13 of the first-round WDQI recipients are also Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems (SLDS) grant recipients, through the U.S. Department of Education's SLDS program which has awarded a total of approximately \$500 million. A second round of grants will be awarded to approximately 13 new states, with the Solicitation for Grant Applications (SGA) expected to be available in the late fall or early winter 2011. Ms. Louton suggested that Advisory Group members contact her via e-mail (Louton.Kathryn@dol.gov) with follow-up questions on the presentation or requests for additional information.

V. Training and Employment Guidance Letter (No. 5-08) Policy for Collection and Use of Workforce System Participants' Social Security Numbers

Ms. Louton briefly reviewed the Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL 5-08) *Policy for Collection and Use of Workforce System Participants' Social Security Numbers* that had been referenced during the March Advisory Group meeting and noted the TEGL is also available on the WRIS Web site. TEGL 5-08 provides states with guidance related to collecting and using social security numbers for participants who access Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and other workforce programs' services. The Training and Employment Guidance Letter may be accessed at: http://www.doleta.gov/performance/pfdocs/TEGL_0508_Policy_Collection_Use_Participants_SSNs.pdf.

VI. Quarterly Technical Report of WRIS Operations

Martha Stephens, from the WRIS Operator/ACS, discussed the Technical Operations report, which had been e-mailed to Advisory Group in advance of the meeting. Ms. Stephens provided an overview of the operational participants and noted that 49 states and the District of Columbia submitted data for the Distributed Data Base Index (DDBI) in the first quarter. Hawaii is now testing its programming and hopes to be able to participate in the next DDBI cycle beginning July 11, 2011. Although Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands are currently not participating in the DDBI, both are eligible for WRIS membership. Ms. Stephens reported that the fourth quarter 2010 DDBI data is now available online and the first quarter 2011 DDBI data will be available July 11, 2011. Ms. Stephens invited Advisory Group members with questions regarding her presentation, or the report, to contact her by e-mail at: Martha.C.Stephens@acs-inc.com.

VII. WRIS Training Schedule

Ms. Staha outlined the upcoming meetings and training modules. The PACIA/SUIA/IT Summer Town Hall WebEx, scheduled for June 9, will focus on data quality and best practices for eliminating duplicate records. She invited states to submit their practices for eliminating duplicates via WRIS@dol.gov, and noted that New Hampshire has provided an outline of its practices.

A Confidentiality Compliance Review and Incident Response WebEx is scheduled for August 30, 2011. The WebEx will address confidentiality compliance self assessments, preparation for on-site confidentiality compliance reviews, incident response, best practices, and general recommendations. Ms. Staha noted that a seventh review category, Data Usage, will be added to the prior six for the 2011-2012 on-site Confidentiality Compliance reviews. Ms. Staha reported that 18 states had participated in the April 2011 Confidentiality Review and Incident Response WebEx.

Ms. Staha invited the group to identify any questions, challenges, or additional topics for discussion. Deb Serum (MN) raised issues she had experienced with the Federal Employment Data Exchange System (FEDES), specifically delayed U.S. Postal Service (USPS) data. Ms. Staha was unaware of problems with timeliness and indicated she would discuss with the partners the constraints, the value of the data, and the importance of the time-lines.

Dan Holton (TN) inquired about the status of the WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker Program Evaluation (WADE) that had been discussed during the Fourth Quarter 2010 Advisory Group meeting in December. The WADE study was authorized through the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 to determine the effectiveness of the WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs by examining intensive services and training. Mr. Holton asked if the local areas had been selected and if the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was available. Ms. Staha said she would confirm the current status and noted she understood that the local sites for study have not yet been released.

In response to Deb Serum's (MN) remarks that a few High Growth grant recipients had requested wage data for reporting, Ms. Staha indicated that grant recipients receive only aggregate wage data, not individual wage data, through WRIS for performance measures.

Ms. Serum also inquired about the May 25, 2011, *Federal Register* notice that indicated ETA will use data received through WRIS to evaluate common measures. At pages 30391-30392, the *Federal Register* indicated: "the ETA plans to use these records to obtain wage record information from the Wage Record Interchange System which, in turn, ETA will use to compute common measures." Ms. Staha confirmed that ETA does not have access to any individual wage data through WRIS, but does have an MOU with the Kansas PACIA to provide only aggregate data through the Common Reporting Information System (CRIS). Ms. Staha indicated she will review the referenced *Federal Register* notice and will advise the Advisory Group of subsequent actions.

VIII. Additional Business

Ms. Staha reported that the Performance and Fiscal Reporting Forums, discussed in March, would be presented by Webinar. As soon as the presentations are finalized, additional information will be available through the Division of Strategic Planning and Performance's Web site: <http://www.doleta.gov/performance/>.

Ms. Staha proposed September 22, 2011 (2:00 p.m. EDT) as the date for the Advisory Group's Third Quarter conference call meeting. No objections were raised.

IX. Adjournment

Before adjourning the conference call, Ms. Staha thanked Advisory Group members for their participation in the Second Quarter 2011 meeting and invited them to e-mail any follow-up questions to WRIS@dol.gov. The meeting was adjourned at 2:45 p.m. EDT.