

Summary Report of the WRIS Advisory Group

Fourth Quarter 2013 Meeting

December 12, 2013

The Fourth Quarter 2013 meeting of the Advisory Group of the Wage Record Interchange System (WRIS) was convened by conference call on December 12, 2013 (2:00 p.m. EST) from the Employment and Training Administration (ETA), U.S. Department of Labor, Washington, D.C.

I. Welcome and Opening Remarks

Karen A. Staha, Chief of the Division of Strategic Planning and Performance for the Office of Policy Development and Research (OPDR, ETA), welcomed the WRIS Advisory Group representatives to the Fourth Quarter 2013 conference call meeting. Ms. Staha briefly reviewed the agenda and introduced participants from ETA, the Office of the Solicitor's Employment and Training Legal Services (ETLS,) and the WRIS support contractors Xerox and CDS2. 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 calling a state-by-state roll.

Ms. Staha noted that, as discussed during the Third Quarter 2013 meeting, WRIS2 Advisory Group members were invited to participate informally in the WRIS Advisory Group meeting. The WRIS2 Data Sharing Agreement (Section V. Governance) provides for two WRIS2 Advisory Group meetings. The next formal meeting of the WRIS2 Advisory Group is scheduled for March 2013, and will be combined with the WRIS Advisory Group meeting. This call was the first attempt to combine the WRIS and WRIS2 Advisory Group calls into one comprehensive meeting since there is overlap between members and information.

Ms. Staha reported that the Department of Labor is maintaining the focus on developing career pathways and related support. There is a continuing emphasis on the priority goal of credential attainment, as outlined in the FY 2014-2018 Strategic Plan. ETA already has seen increases in individual obtainment of industry-recognized credentials and improved reporting. Ms. Staha also noted that the FY 2014-2018 Strategic Plan is in its final review stage and may be approved by January 2014. The Plan and stakeholder webchats are available for review on the DOL public Web site at: <http://www.dol.gov/sec/stratplan/2014outreach/>. In closing, Ms. Staha invited Advisory Group members to forward their ideas regarding ETA's support for performance reporting of improved credential attainment to WRIS@dol.gov.

II. Adoption of Summary Report for Third Quarter 2013 Meeting

Ms. Staha briefly reviewed the Draft Summary Report of the Third Quarter Advisory Group meeting, held September 19, 2013. The report was distributed to the Advisory Group for review in November, and no comments or corrections were received. A motion to approve the Draft Summary Report was made by Jo Doyal of Alabama, and the motion was seconded by Jeanie Meholchick of Idaho. Following the motions, the Third Quarter 2013 Summary Report was adopted without objection.

III. WRIS2 Membership Report

John Glen, WRIS2 Workgroup Chairman (Oregon) and Heather Parker, ETA Federal Program Officer for WRIS, WRIS2 and CRIS, provided a brief update on the status of the opt-in WRIS2 expanded data sharing initiative. Currently, 34 members of WRIS also have signed the WRIS2 Data Sharing Agreement and are participants in the expanded exchange. The states of Ohio and Virginia are the most recent members. WRIS members interested in joining WRIS2 may review the ETA public Web site for additional information or contact Ms. Parker through WRIS@dol.gov. The WRIS2 Web site is available at: http://www.doleta.gov/performance/wris_2.cfm.

Ms. Parker briefly reviewed that WRIS 2 was established to facilitate the preparation of aggregate statistical reports and analysis to satisfy the reporting and performance requirements for certain Federal or state training and education programs and to allow data for research and evaluation of those programs to be made available while maintaining the confidentiality of personal identifiable information. WRIS 2 permits members to share wage data in aggregate form with Third Party Entities (TPE). In the WRIS2 Data Sharing Agreement, a TPE is defined as any public body, agency, or private career school required by law to meet state and/or Federal performance measures. A PACIA, or its agent or consultant, cannot be designated as a TPE.

At the invitation of Ms. Staha, several WRIS2 members briefly discussed how they use wage data received through the WRIS2 Clearinghouse. Both Nebraska and Oregon described the use of wage data from WRIS2 for adult education performance reporting.

In closing, Ms. Parker extended appreciation to the WRIS2 Workgroup members for their continued willingness to share perspective and ideas in response to questions raised by other WRIS2 members. She noted that the WRIS2 Town Hall had been held on June 4, 2013, and included presentations by Louisiana, Oregon, Xerox and ETA. The Town Hall presentations are available to WRIS members through an e-mailed request to WRIS@dol.gov.

IV. WRIS PACIA and SUIA Training

Ms. Parker provided an overview of recent and upcoming WRIS trainings for PACIA and SUIA staff members. The recent WRIS Town Hall, held December 5, included presentations

on Tennessee's "Training Provider Performance Accountability" by Dr. Roosevelt Noble; and on Missouri's "Confidentiality and Security Policy" by Clinton Flowers. ETA addressed the restrictions on the use of wage data from WRIS and WRIS2 in data warehouses and databases. The December WRIS Town Hall PowerPoint is available to state members by request to WRIS@dol.gov. Ms. Parker also encouraged staff members to forward discussion topics and questions for the spring Town Hall, planned for April 2014. The Town Hall had been postponed from the scheduled date in October due to the closure of the Department of Labor during the government shut down.

The 2014 annual Confidentiality Compliance and Incident Response WebEx for both SUIA and PACIA staff members is planned for January 30, Thursday. Security topics and questions to be included in the WebEx are welcomed and should be e-mailed to WRIS@dol.gov.

A WRIS orientation or refresher WebEx is available to any WRIS member during a time period convenient for its staff. ETA will work with the staff to ensure the training module will address the specific needs of the member. Please contact ETA through WRIS@dol.gov to schedule a WebEx.

V. Quarterly Technical Report of WRIS Operations

Amanda Gohl, of Xerox the WRIS operations contractor, discussed the slides in the WRIS and WRIS2 Technical Operations Review PowerPoint, e-mailed to the Advisory Group representatives and staff members in advance of the meeting.

In her WRIS presentation, Ms. Gohl highlighted slide two, which lists states that are connecting to the Clearinghouse via SNA and FTP. This information could be of interest since states connected by FTP might need additional time to process a PACIA's request. Members are asked to allow several days when establishing the requested return date to provide for any processing issues. Slides three and four highlight the historical data trends for traffic requests. Slide five shows the updated DDBI schedule when eight quarters of data are available to match. The second quarter of 2013 has been available since October 14. Files are due by January 6, 2014 for the third quarter 2013 and will be available on-line January 13, 2014 for cross matching purposes. The remaining PowerPoint slides detail WRIS operations, connections, reference information, and contact information. Ms. Gohl's WRIS2 presentation highlighted specific WRIS2 data and information. Slide two shows WRIS2 member SUIAs that are sharing data through the WRIS2 Clearinghouse and the member SUIAs that are preparing to test the WRIS2 interface data, but are not yet live. Slides four and five detail the volume data for WRIS2 in terms of request and responses.

In closing, Ms. Gohl invited members to raise additional questions through WRIS.Support at Xerox.com or WRIS@dol.gov. The Xerox telephone number for WRIS is: 800-327-9250 Option 2.

VI. Additional Business and Discussion

Following conclusion of the scheduled agenda items, Ms. Staha encouraged Advisory Group members to raise questions, comments, or issues for discussion.

Ms. Staha encouraged Advisory Group members to submit requests or suggestions for future meeting discussion topics via e-mail to WRIS@dol.gov.

A representative inquired about a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document regarding issues and questions members commonly encountered. ETA is currently reviewing archived questions and related responses to develop a comprehensive draft. As noted during the September conference call, representatives are invited to e-mail questions to be included to WRIS@dol.gov.

In response to a member question, ETA updated members on the FEDES status. A meeting is planned with representatives and a report should be available prior to the First Quarter 2013 Advisory Group conference call.

A representative from New York State brought to the group's attention a revision to the [NYS Labor Law Section 537\(g\)\(10\)](#) that will be effective on December 23, 2013: *"...As used in this clause, the term "aggregated statistical form" shall mean, in the case of information regarding individuals, a data set that includes information about no fewer than ten individuals, and, in the case of employer information, a data set that includes information about no fewer than three employers, of which no one employer comprises more than eighty percent of the aggregated data set."* The provision could affect New York's potential participation in the WRIS2 initiative. In response, several representatives provided their perspective on the New York Labor Law revision. Ms. Staha expressed her appreciation to members for their input and feedback, as these are important issues to bring to the table.

In closing, Ms. Staha proposed the date of March 13 (2 p.m. EDT) for the WRIS Advisory Group First Quarter 2014 conference call meeting, to be convened in conjunction with the WRIS2 Advisory Group as discussed during the Third Quarter 2013 meeting. Ms. Staha encouraged Advisory Group members to submit suggestions for discussion topics and asked that notification of conflicts for the proposed March 13 date be e-mailed to WRIS@dol.gov so that ETA may consider an alternate convenient for the majority of the Advisory Group representatives. The Fourth Quarter 2013 Advisory Group meeting concluded at 2:50 p.m.