

***Summary Report: Third Quarter 2015 Meeting
Combined Advisory Group
Wage Record Interchange System (WRIS) and
Wage Record Interchange System 2 (WRIS2)***

Convened by conference call on September 10, 2015 (2:00 pm EDT) from the Employment and Training Administration (ETA), U.S. Department of Labor, Washington, DC.

I. Welcome and Remarks

Karen Staha, Chief of the Division of Strategic Planning and Performance for the Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration (ETA), Office of Policy Development and Research (OPDR) welcomed state participants to the WRIS and WRIS2 Advisory Group Third Quarter 2015 meeting. Ms. Staha introduced participating representatives from ETA, the Office of the Solicitor, and the technical assistance contractors and briefly reviewed the discussion agenda for the quarterly meeting.

Ms. Staha discussed the implementation status for the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), which became effective on July 1, 2015. She noted that the performance accountability provisions within WIOA would not be effective until July 2016, and that ETA had issued several Training and Guidance Letters (TEGL) and notices in the Federal Register in recent months.

Ms. Staha indicated that a joint information collection request (ICR) to meet reporting requirements under Section 116 of WIOA was published, by the Departments of Labor and Education (ED), in the Federal Register on July 22, the anniversary of the signing of WIOA into law. She noted that development of the ICR notice was a collaborative effort among staff from ETA and ED's Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education (OCTAE) and Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA). Ms. Staha encouraged state representatives to submit comments on the ICR by the due date of September 21, 2015.

Ms. Staha reviewed ETA's Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) 04-15, Vision for the One-Stop Delivery System under WIOA. TEGL 04-15, released on August 13, lays out the vision for the delivery system and provides links to key technical assistance resources available for states. The TEGL was developed in collaboration with OCTAE and RSA as well as with the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) at the Department of Health and Human Services.

Ms. Staha thanked the states for submitting comments in response to the WIOA Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, published in April 2015, and reported that ETA received more than 1,100 pages of comments related to the performance accountability sections. She noted that ETA staff members are continuing to thoughtfully review all of the comments in preparation for publishing the Final Rule in the Federal Register.

Ms. Staha said that she also wanted to acknowledge that the Department of Defense (DOD) recently had revised its procedures for sharing data within the Federal Employment Data Exchange System (FEDES) and that ETA is continuing to discuss the revisions with DOD. She reiterated that ETA remains committed to supporting FEDES, which is valuable for state reporting of complete performance outcomes.

Ms. Staha mentioned that ETA continues to review program outcomes and to work on data sharing issues such as access to wage records. Further, she reminded the Advisory Group representatives that WIOA resource materials are available on ETA's WIOA Web site (<http://www.doleta.gov/wioa/>) and on the Division's Web site at: <http://www.doleta.gov/performance/>.

II. Adoption of the Second Quarter 2015 Summary Report

The draft Summary Report of the Second Quarter WRIS-WRIS2 Advisory Group meeting, held June 24, 2015, had been distributed by e-mail to Advisory Group representatives for review. Ms. Staha noted that the June meeting had included discussions regarding implementation of WIOA, WRIS2 membership and operations, inquires from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) regarding the possibility of participating in WRIS2 as a Third Party Entity (TPE), the Common Reporting Information System (CRIS), and formation of the SUIA-PACIA workgroup to review potential revisions to the WRIS and WRIS2 Agreements that would incorporate provisions of WIOA. Ms. Staha indicated that no comments had been received on the draft and requested a motion to adopt the Summary Report as distributed. Following a motion by Eric Hatfield (Louisiana) and a second by Nakita Hicks (North Carolina), the Second Quarter 2015 Summary Report was adopted.

III. Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

Ms. Staha noted that Advisory Group representatives had suggested that continuing discussions of WIOA provisions and implementation be included on the agenda for the quarterly meetings.

In responding to state questions regarding the requirements for the state plans, Ms. Staha indicated that the state plans are due in March 2016. She also reported that a related notice, Required Elements for Submission of the Unified or Combined State Plan and Plan Modification under WIOA, had been published in the Federal Register on August 6. She encouraged the representatives to submit comments by October 5, 2015, and indicated the notice had been jointly prepared by the Departments of Labor, Education, Health and Human Services, Agriculture and Housing and Urban Development.

Nakita Hicks (North Carolina) inquired if the WRIS system might be used for the state plan and related core partners rather than the WRIS2 system. Ms. Parker stated that although the WRIS Data Sharing Agreement currently in effect does not permit use for core partner programs, those purposes are authorized under the WRIS2 Data Sharing Agreement. Ms. Parker also reported that ETA is working to ensure the renegotiated agreements will incorporate provisions to meet the needs of the core partners under WIOA.

Ms. Staha also briefly discussed the requirement under WIOA for development of a statistical adjustment model for use in the negotiation process to establish performance targets and indicated that a consultative process is ongoing. Ms. Staha indicated that webinars focused on

proposed statistical model methodology would be offered to provide opportunities for valuable consultation with WIOA stakeholders and that presentations would be from both the Departments of Labor and Education.

IV. WRIS and WRIS2 Data Sharing Agreements: Workgroup

Heather Parker (ETA) reported that ETA has been working across the core partners named in WIOA to review aspects of existing data sharing agreements and identify new requirements in terms of the structure of data sharing exchanges and compliance with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). FERPA applies to all educational agencies and institutions that receive funding under any program administered by Department of Education.

Ms. Parker noted that the discussions among ETA, OCTAE and RSA had progressed and that the previously discussed WRIS -WRIS2 workgroup for revisions to the agreements would be established within the next few weeks. She indicated that ETA would reach out to representatives who had expressed earlier interest in serving on the workgroup and invited others who were now interested to e-mail ETA through: WRIS@dol.gov or LStevens@cds2.com. If representatives wish to share ideas and suggestions for the revised agreements but not serve on the workgroup, she asked that they e-mail information through WRIS@dol.gov with a subject line marked “Revised Data Sharing Agreements.” Ms. Parker noted that consultations with the core partners are key and suggested that Advisory Group representatives begin discussions with their respective state partners for RSA and OCTAE. She further encouraged PACIA and SUIA representatives within a state to discuss potential revisions to the data sharing agreements that would meet the requirements under WIOA and be compliant with state statutes and regulations as well as FERPA.

In response to a question from Clinton Flowers (Missouri) about the estimated timeframe and milestones for the revised agreements and the workgroup, Ms. Parker noted that ETA is developing projected timeframes that incorporate a state review and comment period so that respective agencies can share recommendations and concerns with ETA. Once the agreements workgroup is fully implemented, their suggestions will be provided to the WRIS-WRIS2 Advisory Group.

V. WRIS2 Membership and Operations Status

John Glen (Oregon) and Heather Parker (ETA) welcomed four new members to the WRIS2 interchange system: Alaska, North Dakota, Vermont, and the District of Columbia. Mr. Glen, who serves as chairman of the WRIS2 workgroup, noted that WRIS2 currently has 42 members – 40 states, the District of Columbia and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. In his remarks, Mr. Glen outlined several key provisions of WRIS2: a) to participate in WRIS2, states must sign the WRIS2 Data Sharing Agreement; b) the WRIS2 system allows members to request and use out-of-state wage data to produce aggregate statistical reports for Third Party Entities (TPE). A TPE is defined in the WRIS2 Agreement as any public body, agency, or private career school required by law to meet state and/or federal performance measures and a PACIA, or its agent or consultant, may not be designated as a TPE; and c) in WRIS2, the confidential, individual-level wage data received remains within the designated PACIA. Through a separate agreement with

the Third Party Entity, the PACIA produces and provides the aggregated statistical reports to the TPE. Ms. Parker and Mr. Glen extended a special thanks to Clinton Flowers (Missouri), Adam Leonard (Texas) and Drew Maxfield (Utah), who helped develop the WRIS2 Data Sharing Agreement and continue to serve on the WRIS2 workgroup.

Ms. Staha mentioned that she had participated in a recent meeting, sponsored by a national non-governmental organization, that included a number of state representatives who expressed interest in making WRIS and WRIS2 more flexible for exchanging data. Ms. Staha had shared with the group that the existing WRIS and WRIS2 Data Sharing Agreements reflect collaboration among state and federal partners. The WRIS and WRIS2 Agreements that are currently in effect were developed initially by states and additional provisions then were incorporated to ensure the agreement provisions were sound legally. Ms. Staha requested that the representatives be mindful of the confidentiality provisions and the related state laws and regulations.

VI. Quarterly Report of WRIS and WRIS2 Technical Operations

Cynthia Binkley, Customer Support Manager for Xerox, reviewed selected pages of the *WRIS and WRIS2 Quarterly Technical Reviews*, which had been distributed to representatives in advance of the meeting. Ms. Binkley discussed the upcoming schedule for the quarterly Distributed Database Index (DDBI) for WRIS and WRIS2 and reported that SUIA reporting was due at the Clearinghouse by October 5. The updated WRIS and WRIS2 DDBIs will be available for PACIA access on October 12. Ms. Binkley also reviewed the security processes in place for the ICON system, which require compliance with the Federal Information Security Management Act (FISMA) and the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) guidelines. Annual UI-ICON internal security assessments are conducted in accordance with the NIST Special Publication 800-53 security control set. The current Annual Audit was completed in August 2015. Ms. Binkley also discussed the security procedures for access to the Clearinghouse by state PACIA staff members and reminded Advisory Group representatives that a requested access account is approved for a specific staff member. The sharing of a state staff member's individual passcode is considered a security risk to the system and is not permitted. In closing, Ms. Binkley noted that direct technical support for WRIS or WRIS2 was available to state members by phone on a 24-hour basis, 365 days each year, through: 1.800.327.9250 Option 2.

VII. Additional Business

Ms. Staha asked Advisory Group representatives if there were additional discussion topics they wished to raise. In responding to a question from Clinton Flowers (Missouri) regarding the general schedules for the Annual Report, Ms. Staha noted that the related TEGl currently is in the Department's clearance process. As soon as the TEGl is approved, it will be available on the Division's public Web site at: <http://www.doleta.gov/performance/>

In closing, Ms. Staha proposed that the Fourth Quarter 2015 WRIS-WRIS2 Advisory Group meeting be held by conference call on either December 3 or December 10, both Thursdays. Should there be known conflicts she requested that representatives advise ETA so that alternative dates could be considered.

Ms. Staha thanked all of the representatives for their contributions and adjourned the meeting at

2:05 pm EST.