

***Summary Report: Fourth Quarter 2015 Meeting  
Combined Advisory Groups  
Wage Record Interchange System (WRIS) and  
Wage Record Interchange System2 (WRIS2)***

*Convened by conference call on December 10, 2015, (2:00 pm EST) 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 ETA's Office of Policy Development and Research (OPDR), welcomed the WRIS-WRIS2 Advisory Group representatives from the states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico to the Fourth Quarter 2015 meeting. Ms. Staha also introduced participants from OPDR, the Office of the Solicitor/Employment and Training Legal Services (SOL/ETLS), the Office of Unemployment Insurance (OUI), and the technical assistance contractors, Xerox and CDS2; and, briefly reviewed the discussion agenda distributed in advance of the meeting. To conserve time for discussion, in place of a full roll call she requested that Advisory Group representatives confirm attendance through an e-mail to [WRIS@dol.gov](mailto:WRIS@dol.gov) and note their affiliation with the WRIS-WRIS2 SUIA, PACIA or IT sections of their respective workforce agencies.

Ms. Staha discussed the continuing implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), which became effective on July 1, 2015, and ETA's ongoing development and release of WIOA-related guidance. She noted that although the performance accountability provisions do not become effective until July 2016, ETA had issued several Training and Guidance Letters (TEGLs) and Training and Employment Notices (TENs), as well as notices requesting comments in the Federal Register. Ms. Staha briefly discussed Training and Guidance Letter (TEGL) 07-15, issued on November 4, 2015, that provides guidance regarding the content of the WIA Annual Report narrative. Reference documents and materials related to WIOA are available on ETA's public Web site at: <http://www.doleta.gov/WIOA/>. Ms. Staha indicated that information related to performance accountability, in most cases, also is posted on the Division of Strategic Planning and Performance's public Web site at: <http://www.doleta.gov/performance/>.

Ms. Staha briefly outlined the consultative webinars hosted by ETA in early December to discuss the proposed statistical adjustment models, as required under WIOA in Section 116. The WIOA performance accountability provisions incorporate the use of a statistical adjustment model for setting targets for the core performance indicators; and, the Departments of Labor and Education have collaborated to develop a proposed model. She noted that the PowerPoint from the ETA webinars, held December 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>, had been distributed to the Advisory Group prior to the meeting and that transcripts, as well as the PowerPoint, also are available on the Workforce3One Web site at: <https://www.workforce3one.org/>. Ms. Staha emphasized that ETA was interested in understanding varying perspectives and encouraged representatives to continue to share their viewpoints through [WRIS@dol.gov](mailto:WRIS@dol.gov).

## **II. Adoption of the Third Quarter 2015 Summary Report**

Ms. Staha reviewed the WRIS-WRIS2 Advisory Group's Third Quarter 2015 meeting, held on September 10. In addition to receiving reports regarding the WRIS and WRIS2 system's technical operations and WRIS2 membership, the Advisory Group had informal discussions about WIOA implementation, the recent TEGLs and proposed rules published for comment in the Federal Register, and the voluntary data sharing agreements renegotiation discussion group.

The draft Third Quarter Summary Report had been distributed to the Advisory Group for comment prior to the meeting. In the absence of questions, Ms. Staha called for a motion to adopt the Summary Report. Following the motion by Carolyn Mitchell (Maryland), which was seconded by Nakita Hicks (North Carolina), the Third Quarter 2015 Summary Report was adopted as distributed.

## **III. Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)**

Ms. Staha noted that Advisory Group representatives previously had requested that continuing discussions regarding WIOA provisions and implementation be included on the agenda for the quarterly WRIS-WRIS2 meetings. During the discussions, Ms. Staha thanked the representatives for submitting formal comments concerning the collection of data for the WIOA Workforce Performance Accountability, Information, and Reporting System. She indicated that the comment period had closed and that the Division is reviewing the submissions. The programs that will be required to report through the streamlined system are WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth, Wagner Peyser Employment Services, National Farmworker Jobs, Trade Adjustment Assistance, Youth Build, Indian and Native American, and the Jobs for Veterans' State Grants. Requiring all of the programs to use a standard set of data elements, definitions, and specifications at all levels of the workforce system will help improve the quality of the performance information received by the Department of Labor. Ms. Staha indicated that a streamlined reporting structure, initiated in 2004 in an earlier format, would permit more resources to be available to serve individuals.

## **IV. WRIS and WRIS2 Data Sharing Agreements: Workgroup**

Heather Parker (OPDR) noted that ETA's discussions with the Department of Education's Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education (OCTAE) and the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) had progressed and that the previously discussed WRIS-WRIS2 workgroup for renegotiations of the data sharing agreements had been established. Volunteers from 16 states had participated in the organizational meeting and in the subsequent discussion session. In addition, Ms. Parker indicated that Federal representatives from OCTAE and RSA had attended and she had encouraged PACIA and SUIA representatives to reach out to their state counterparts for a better understanding of the core partners' WIOA reporting requirements and more fulsome discussions. The group had agreed to recommend developing new data sharing agreements rather than making multiple amendments to the two agreements currently in effect. The group also agreed that a name different from WRIS would be helpful to differentiate the WIOA-compliant agreements: SWIS, or State Wage Interchange System.

Ms. Parker requested that any SUIA, PACIA, or IT representative interested in participating with the group forward contact information by e-mail to: [WRIS@dol.gov](mailto:WRIS@dol.gov) and [LStevens@cds2.com](mailto:LStevens@cds2.com). She also noted that, since everyone's time is at a premium, Advisory Group representatives not able to participate could e-mail their concerns and suggestions for the developing agreements through [WRIS@dol.gov](mailto:WRIS@dol.gov). The group would like to take thorny issues into consideration on the front end rather than the back end of the process. In closing her remarks, Ms. Parker encouraged representatives to raise questions regarding the agreements and noted that she would respond with available information or with an indication of where development of the requested information stands.

## V. WRIS2 Membership and Operations Status

Ms. Parker provided the WRIS2 report on behalf of John Glen (Oregon), Chairman of the WRIS2 Workgroup, who had encountered telecommunications issues. Ms. Parker reported that the membership of WRIS2 now stood at 42: 40 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. In addition, another state had advised ETA that it was close to executing the WRIS2 Data Sharing Agreement. The current membership status map and the Agreement are posted on ETA's public WRIS2 Web site: [http://www.doleta.gov/performance/wris\\_2.cfm](http://www.doleta.gov/performance/wris_2.cfm). Ms. Parker noted ETA's previous request, as the administrator of WRIS2, for members to forward a copy of the agreements they have entered into with their state-approved Third Party Entities (TPEs) through: [WRIS@dol.gov](mailto:WRIS@dol.gov). She thanked the WRIS2 members for their consideration and reiterated that the request was made for administrative purposes of the WRIS2 system. Ms. Parker also indicated that the definition of Third Party Entities is included in Section IV of the WRIS2 Data Sharing Agreement: "*Third Party Entities (TPE) are 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.*" Carolyn Mitchell (Maryland) and Katherine Kahle (Montana) asked if any WRIS2 members were willing to share templates of their state agreements signed with state-approved Third Party Entities. Ms. Parker indicated that ETA would contact member states to inquire about willingness to share the templates and requested that additional states wishing to receive copies let her know through [WRIS@dol.gov](mailto:WRIS@dol.gov).

## VI. Quarterly Report of WRIS and WRIS2 Technical Operations

Amanda Gohl, Xerox Account Manager, discussed the *WRIS and WRIS2 Quarterly Technical Reviews*, which were distributed to representatives in advance of the meeting. Ms. Gohl reported that the 2016 deadlines for SUIAs to provide data for the Distributed Database Index (DDBI) were January 4, April 4, July 5, and October 3, 2016. Corresponding data will be available for PACIA use on January 11, April 11, July 11, and October 10, 2016. Ms. Gohl also outlined the WRIS and WRIS2 request and response volumes depicted in the *Technical Reviews* and briefly addressed the PACIA processes to lessen the impact on SUIAs. She reported that Xerox undergoes annual FISMA and NIST audits and that the 2015 audits were completed in August. If additional information would be helpful for the IT security offices of WRIS members, Ms. Gohl suggested that representatives let Xerox know through: [WRIS@dol.gov](mailto:WRIS@dol.gov). In closing, she noted that direct technical support for WRIS or WRIS2 was available to state members by e-mail or by phone on a 24/7 basis.

**VII. Additional Business and Discussions**

Ms. Staha invited Advisory Group representatives to discuss additional topics or raise new business. She proposed March 17 for the First Quarter 2016 WRIS-WRIS2 Advisory Group meeting. Ms. Staha noted a March date was difficult to select to avoid conflicts with state preparations for the Combined or Unified State Plans or with meetings of other national organizations. She requested that Advisory Group representatives advise ETA of conflicts with the proposed date of March 17 as soon as possible so that alternate March dates could be considered. In closing, Ms. Staha expressed her appreciation to the representatives for their many contributions to the WRIS and WRIS2 systems throughout 2015 and said she looked forward to working with them throughout 2016. The Fourth Quarter 2015 meeting was adjourned at 2:45 pm EST.