

Workforce Information Advisory Council

Summary of Virtual Meeting

April 21, 2022

12:00 PM – 2:00 PM ET

The Workforce Information Advisory Council (WIAC) was convened for a virtual meeting at 12:00 PM on Thursday, April 21, 2022. The Council was convened pursuant to Section 308 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA) (Pub. L. 113-128), which amends section 15 of the Wagner-Peyser Act of 1933 (29 U.S.C. § 491–2) and in accordance with the provisions of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA), as amended (5 U.S.C. App.) and its implementing regulation at 41 CFR 102-3.

Mr. Steven Rietzke, Chief, Division of National Programs, Tools, and Technical Assistance (DNPTTA), Employment and Training Administration (ETA), U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) and Designated Federal Officer (DFO) for the Council, convened the meeting. The entirety of the meeting was open to the public and concluded at 2:00 PM on Thursday, April 21, 2022.

In Attendance:

Members of the Workforce Information Advisory Council

Bruce Madson, Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (Chair)

Daryl Bassett, Arkansas Department of Workforce Services

Alicia Crouch, Kentucky Community and Technical College System

Lesley Hirsch, New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development

Tamika Ledbetter, Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development

Chelsea Mason – Placek, Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO

Andrew Reamer, George Washington Institute of Public Policy, George Washington University

David Schmidt, Nevada Department of Employment, Training, and Rehabilitation

Fran Valentine, Indiana Department of Workforce Development

Jennifer Zeller, Georgia Power

Members of the Council Not in Attendance

Deborah Carlson, Texas Workforce Commission

Adrienne Johnston, Florida Bureau of Workforce Statistics and Economic Research

Dean Jones, Greenville County Workforce Development Board

Staff

Steve Rietzke, Chief, DNPTTA, ETA (DFO)

Kirk Mueller, BLS

Don Haughton, ETA

Ken Robertson, BLS

Lauren Fairley, ETA

Cynthia Forland, Forland Consulting

Pam Frugoli, ETA

Torrie Nickerson, The GA Team

Danielle Kittrell, ETA

Betsy Roberts, The GA Team

Julie Hatch, BLS

Members of the Public Offering Comments or Called Upon to Address the Council

Marty Romitti, LMI Institute

Others Attending for All or a Portion of the Meeting

Lucas Arbulu, DOL

Dana Byrum, Arkansas Rehabilitation Services

Charissa Childers, Arkansas Division of Workforce Services

Dianne Doyle, Arkansas Division of Workforce Services

Carmen Edwards, Central Arkansas Planning and Development District

Tridena Feaster, Arkansas Division of Workforce Services

Tiffany Finck-Haynes, SMART Union

Christy Fuerst, Arkansas Division of Workforce Services

Claudia Griffin, Arkansas Division of Workforce Services

Donna Harris, Arkansas Division of Workforce Services

Gretchen Hunt, Arkansas Rehabilitation Services

Beverly Lovett, Arkansas Division of Workforce Services

Jennifer Pike, Arkansas Division of Workforce Services

Tanya Plunkett, Arkansas Division of Workforce Services

Ashlie Ross, Western Arkansas Planning and Development District

Marsha Taylor, Arkansas Adult Learning Resource Center

Elroy Willoughby, Arkansas Division of Workforce Services

Subcommittees Reporting During this Meeting

Subcommittee Two: Data Sharing and Synchronization

Lesley Hirsch (Chair)

Deborah Carlson

Dean Jones

Bruce Madson

Subcommittee Three: Workers and the Work

Andrew Reamer (Chair)

Adrienne Johnston

Chelsea Mason – Placek

Proceedings: April 21, 2022 12:00 PM ET

Welcome, Review of Agenda, and Goals for April Meeting

MR. RIETZKE convened the meeting of the Workforce Information Advisory Council (WIAC). He provided opening remarks on the agenda in addition to the objectives for the April and May meetings.

MR. RIETZKE thanked the Subcommittee Chairs and the Peer Review Committee for their work on the draft recommendations. He shared that the primary goal for the meeting is to review the draft recommendations from the Data Sharing and Synchronization Subcommittee and Workers and the Work Subcommittee.

MR. RIETZKE welcomed members of the public and asked them to introduce themselves in the chat box.

The Council members who were present at the meeting introduced themselves.

Opening Statements

MR. RIETZKE introduced Council Chair, **Bruce Madson**.

MR. MADSON greeted the Council members. He emphasized the WIAC's current opportunity to strengthen future recommendations and understand how the previous recommendations have been received by the Department of Labor (DOL) and are being incorporated into the planning of the agency.

Review of Secretary Walsh's Official Response to August 2021 Expedited Recommendations and Overview of FY23 Administration Budget

MR. RIETZKE led the Council through reviewing the formal response from the Department of Labor (Department) to the August 2021 Council-approved expedited recommendations, as well as an overview of the FY23 Administration Budget.

MR. RIETZKE summarized the 2021 Expedited Recommendations as voted on by the Council and shared, in detail, the Department's responses to each of the three recommendations. **MR. RIETZKE** emphasized the Department's interest in continuing to explore the issues and priorities as outlined in the expedited recommendations. He also confirmed that the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Policy (OASP) has begun to convene a cross-Department working group on the Future of Workers.

A copy of Secretary Walsh's response letter is available at <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/wioa/wiac/meetings>.

MR. RIETZKE provided an overview of the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) portion of the FY23 Administration Budget. He outlined the FY23 proposals from DOL to Congress that are in alignment with the WIAC's recommendations, specifically, an increase in Workforce Information Grants to States (WIGS) funding by \$23 million.

A copy of the Employment and Training Administration FY23 Congressional Budget Justification is available at: <https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/general/budget/2023/CBJ-2023-V1-07.pdf>

MR. RIETZKE turned over the platform to facilitator, **Cynthia Forland, Forland Consulting**.

Subcommittee Reports on Recommendations

MS. FORLAND facilitated the review of the proposed recommendations from the Data Sharing and Synchronization Subcommittee and the Workers and the Work Subcommittee. She called upon each subcommittee chair to summarize their recommendations.

In the discussions that followed each subcommittee report, the Council members provided immediate thoughts, comments, and feedback on each draft.

Pages 3 of these minutes provides a listing of each subcommittee and its members.

Data Sharing and Synchronization Subcommittee Report

Lesley Hirsch, New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development spoke for the Data Sharing and Synchronization Subcommittee. **MS. HIRSCH** provided a review of the background and context of the proposed recommendation. She stated that the subcommittee has focused on the concept of sharing, synchronizing, and standardizing data as it serves evidence-based policy making. Evidence-based policy making promotes continuous learning and improves programs and policies. While evidence-based policy making is possible without sharing data, a centralized solution will make the process more efficient and quicken the accumulation of knowledge while protecting data. **MS. HIRSCH** stated that the subcommittee focused on two types of data sharing: interagency and intergovernmental.

MS. HIRSCH shared that the subcommittee recommends the following:

1. Support immediate action to establish a National Secure Data Service (NSDS).
 - Assign staff to work with Congressional staffers to ensure that language in a bill that establishes a NSDS provides adequate resources and accurately reflects U.S. Department of Labor's (DOL's) needs and the needs of the states that receive funding to implement workforce development and worker benefit programs.
 - Assign staff to engage with and provide comment to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) as it promulgates regulations.
2. Articulate the key principles that must be adhered to in the design of an NSDS.
 - Public-private partnership outside of the federal government statistical infrastructure.
 - Available to state agencies and the research partners.
 - Interagency representation on NSDS oversight body.

- Users of an NSDS should maintain complete control of their own data including right of refusal of research projects, data-sharing agreement terms, disclosure review, and publication review.
 - NSDS should support capacity building within the public sector to ensure that there is a sustainable pipeline of analysts who can use the facility now and into the future.
3. Publicly commit to DOL's engagement with a newly established NSDS.
- As part of the national statistical infrastructure, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) has had a seat at the table at every venue that has studied the formation of an NSDS. The Employment and Training Administration (ETA) has not. ETA should also be engaged in planning for an NSDS to advance evidence building around Unemployment Insurance (UI) and workforce development programs.
 - DOL issued a 2022-2026 evidence-building plan and a 2022-2023 evaluation plan. If implemented, these plans could greatly advance the state of knowledge around workforce and benefit programs. In light of the development of an NSDS, however, these plans should be revised to more intentionally capitalize on interagency and intergovernmental data sharing and broaden the agency's learning agenda.
 - Recommend at least three high-impact data uses for NSDS pilot projects, at least one of which will have near-term benefits to workforce systems across the nation. Examples can be gleaned from the ongoing work of the Midwest Collaborative to develop unemployment to re-employment business intelligence tools.
 - Dedicate a percentage of the next round of Workforce Data Quality Initiative funding for state projects that take advantage of an NSDS.

Workers and the Work Subcommittee Report

Andrew Reamer, George Washington Institute of Public Policy spoke for the Workers and the Work Subcommittee. **DR. REAMER** provided an overview of the subcommittee's focus on the problem of disconnections between workers seeking work and employers seeking workers. He stated that the subcommittee has identified opportunities to improve workforce and labor market information (WLMI) accuracy, timeliness, and details at state and local levels that will lead to more effective workforce policies and programs and more efficient labor markets.

DR. REAMER summarized the subcommittee's recommendations:

1. Direct BLS and ETA to co-author a plan for improving DOL-supported data on job openings after obtaining input from the trade associations representing WLMI agencies (LMI Institute, NASWA) on the following:
 - Relative costs and benefits of expanding the monthly Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey (JOLTS) to include greater industry and occupational detail at the state and local levels.
 - Interest in expanding the BLS-state programs cooperative agreement to include state pre-release access to JOLTS data.
 - The relative costs and benefits of providing Workforce Information Grants to States (WIGS) at a level sufficient to enable each state to conduct job vacancy surveys in targeted industries and occupations as needed and as a valuable complement to JOLTS.
 - Opportunities to improve WLMI through utilization of the National Labor Exchange (NLx) Research Hub.

2. To improve UI data reliability and detail, direct ETA's Office of Unemployment Insurance (OUI) and the Secretary's Office of Unemployment Insurance Modernization (OUIM) to obtain state agency input through NASWA regarding how DOL can best provide UI grant funding to expand state capacity to gather and effectively use current, reliable UI data in support of UI claimants finding new work.
3. To better understand and address the barriers workers experience in the search for work, direct the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Policy (OASP) to prepare a report, in consultation with ETA and BLS, for the Secretary's consideration that:
 - Identifies public and private data sources with the potential to build evidence regarding workers' experiences and challenges in seeking and finding new jobs.
 - Suggests options for DOL agencies to use these data sources to help address barriers that workers experience.

Public Comment

MR. RIETZKE opened the platform for the public attendees to ask questions and provide comments and feedback. One public attendee requested to address the Council. **MR. RIETZKE** welcomed public attendee Marty Romitti, LMI Institute.

MR. ROMMITTI thanked **MR. RIETZKE** for the opportunity to address the Council. He expressed the LMI Institute's support of the WIAC and the proposed recommendations and affirmed their desire to work with BLS and ETA. **MR. ROMMITTI** also outlined the differences between the LMI Institute and the National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA) and how the two work together to support states.

MR. RIETZKE thanked **MR. ROMMITTI** for his comments.

MR. RIETZKE requested that the public attendees send a request in advance of the next meeting if they would like to address the Council.

Large Group Discussion on Subcommittee Recommendations

MS. FORLAND led the Council through the discussion on the subcommittees' proposed recommendations. **MS. FORLAND** reiterated the proposed recommendations as presented by the subcommittee chairs and encouraged the Council members to consider any last questions or issues with the two drafts.

In the conversations that followed, the Council members asked questions on the two drafts and discussed potential areas of clarification. **MS. FORLAND** charged the Council members with reflecting on the draft recommendations and providing final edits to the subcommittee chairs via email, by Monday, April 25, 2022. **MS. FORLAND** stated that the goal of the next meeting is to finalize the recommendations and vote to approve.

Closing and Next Steps

MR. RIETZKE thanked the Council members for their time and collaboration. He reiterated that the first objective for the next meeting on May 11th is to review the final suggested edits to the draft recommendations and then the Council will vote to approve the recommendations. Afterwards, the Council will revisit their path forward as decided at the February 3rd, 2022 meeting.

The meeting was adjourned.