



## David Schmidt Video Recording Transcript Virtual WIAC Meeting on Monday, December 4, 2023

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David Schmidt - DETR: Good afternoon. I'm David Schmidt, and I'm the Chief Economist for the Nevada Department of Employment training and rehabilitation.

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David Schmidt - DETR: I serve as one of the 4 representatives of Labor Market Information directors on the WIAC. And so, I'd like to talk to you a little bit about my experience – what it means to be a labor market information director, maybe share a little bit about what I've seen in other States as well. I've been the chief economist since February of 2018. So, I have about 5 and a half years in this particular role.

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David Schmidt - DETR: We are organized within the department of employment training and rehabilitation in the State. And, like most labor market information directors, that means we're organized within the State corollary of the US. Department of Labor. In that we work with a lot of employment and data programs. I think part of this is because we use a lot of data from the unemployment insurance program in our State. In particular, it helps to support 2 of

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our core BLS programs that most labor market information directors are managing; in this case, the QCEW Program and the LAUS program – QCEW and LAUS, as we'll tend to refer to it.

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David Schmidt - DETR: For QCEW, we use data about employment and wage records that employers submit through the unemployment insurance program and use that to build out one of the really foundational data element data programs that we have in the state to have really detailed information about employment and wages by industry and area, and that goes on to help supplement the current employment statistics which produce monthly employment estimates by industry and area,

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David Schmidt - DETR: as well as the sample base for the occupational employment and wage statistics program which surveys employers about the types of work that they have.

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David Schmidt - DETR: And so, we have those 4 core programs, QCEW, OEWS, CES, and LAUS. Most of the Labor Market information directors will be managing those programs through a cooperative agreement with the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The other major program that we have is the workforce information grants to states. This is also through the Department of Labor and comes through the employment training administration as a part of the Wagner Peyser group of funding.

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David Schmidt - DETR: And what this grant does for labor market information shops like ours, is it funds short and long term employment projections. It funds information about occupational licensing which is submitted to a national database. It helps to fund employment reports where we discuss what's going on in the state of the economy,

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David Schmidt - DETR: and it helps to fund a training for workforce staff in the use of the labor market information that we are producing and making public. It's a pretty flexible funding source, because it also lets us

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David Schmidt - DETR: generally make information available to the public and help to fund going public with the data that we're producing through these core BLS programs. And so, even though these are through the 2 different arms of the Department of Labor that the WIAC works with through BLS and ETA separately, they sort of come together in the labor market information shops and are the things that labor market information directors typically work with.

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David Schmidt - DETR: not every LMI director is within the Department of Employment within their state. I have seen it also within the Commerce Department or business departments just based on the sort of getting information out there function that we tend to do. Some states, the WIG and the BLS programs are actually divided into different agencies in different areas,

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David Schmidt - DETR: but it often works together really well, and so most states are organized with those 2 functions within an LMI shop. Some shops do additional things as well. They may have their own survey. They may have supplemental funding sources. Some States are very limited, and BLS and WIG is all that they do, and the only funding that they have.

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David Schmidt - DETR: So there's a lot of variety there. For us, some of the things that we tend to do a lot of are trying to get information out into the public. Most recently, we've been working with the EmployNV Business Hub, which is the workforce

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David Schmidt - DETR: development staff who work directly with businesses to help with recruiting and to help attract, have a spot for job candidates to come into our offices to go. So we work with these business hubs

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David Schmidt - DETR: to do briefings for employers, to try to attract them in to our office, to make those connections between our business services staff and businesses themselves so that they can help provide better services to workers. I view my role very much as

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David Schmidt - DETR: trying to get information out there and then, as people are interested in what we're doing, you might want to hear what's happening with the economy. If we can help to make those connections, then we're helping to augment the workforce development efforts of other parts of the state.

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David Schmidt - DETR: Now, we also do a lot of work with unemployment insurance information in terms of reporting and analysis. We do a lot of forecasting and trying to be sort of data geeks for hire to other parts of the department of employment and working cooperatively with economists and similar projection staff in other areas of the state, like our Economic Development Office, our tourism and housing offices, working with

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David Schmidt - DETR: all manner of people that are interested in employment trends and wage trends. We tend to look very carefully at employment and wages and unemployment data and help to feed that data out to other areas of the state.

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David Schmidt - DETR: We are also involved with

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David Schmidt - DETR: training career support staff. So, people who are working with job seekers and people who are unemployed in working with their skills to help

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David Schmidt - DETR: let them know what sort of occupations are out there. I'm not able to be there today because I'm working with the

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David Schmidt - DETR: OEWS Policy council, which is on the BLS side. This is a federal-state cooperative arrangement that exists for each of the core programs. Where States and the Feds come together to say, how is the program operating? Are there updates that we need to be making? What are the terms of the cooperative agreement that we have that allows our

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David Schmidt - DETR: activities to be managed in a way that's cooperative between both the States and the Feds, and I'm on my way traveling there for a meeting that'll be taking place over the next couple of days.

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David Schmidt - DETR: So, all my directors will get down sometimes into the weeds of the management of these BLS programs. Sometimes they can be a bit more high level and have a subordinate staff that will manage those programs for them, particularly in larger states. Employment projections are one of the things that we get heavily involved with through the WIGS program, both short and long term employment projections and we'll do this on an annual

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David Schmidt - DETR: basis. Typically, we will have either statewide or local data that we're making projections for at any given point in time.

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David Schmidt - DETR: And we're often involved in trying to see how we can most efficiently

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David Schmidt - DETR: review the large amounts of data that are coming in and try to turn that into something that's accessible, digestible and understandable by the public at large. And so, I'm very excited about ways of automating some of the data analysis that we have. There are a lot of programs that are out there, most of which are not the core programs that we actively are managing.

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David Schmidt - DETR: For example, the JOLTS Program, job openings and labor turnover survey, that the BLS produces. This is entirely done at the Federal Government level. It's not something that we are involved with producing, but knowing where the data is, knowing what the data means and trying to get it into the

hands of people that can use it is very much what the labor market information directors are trying to do. How can we take the things that we know about and pass it out

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David Schmidt - DETR: to the public at large. I often liken it to being sort of the spider at the middle of a large web of data. There's a lot of things that are produced outside of our offices that we're trying to bring in and then make accessible to the public at large so that we can do the best job describing to people what's happening in the labor market of our particular states. And so, I'm

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David Schmidt - DETR: actively engaged with trying to look for ways to automate that data analysis. I prefer to use R. I currently work with Dr. Nicola from New Jersey, in having a work group among multiple states, who say, how can we develop better understanding of the tools that are out there that are both affordable and reproducible to share this

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common information that we all have access to, to make sure we can get it into the hands of the people that are working in the states to make this data public.

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David Schmidt - DETR: I could probably talk about this all day. But I think, in short, we're trying to produce data through a couple of different programs.

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David Schmidt - DETR: And then we are trying to inform both the workforce staff, including through the WIOA, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, which funds a lot of the workforce development efforts in the states through the workforce information grants the states just making analysis available for the public through working directly with employers, employer associations,

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David Schmidt - DETR: chambers of commerce, other departments within the State, policymakers,

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David Schmidt - DETR: legislators, and other elected officials providing as much information as possible to equip people to make decisions with the best information that we can provide them.

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David Schmidt - DETR: And I think, in short, that's sort of my snapshot of what a labor market information director does. Thanks.