

# Workforce Information Advisory Council

## Summary of Virtual Meeting

### December 4, 2023

### 2:00 PM – 4:00 PM ET

The Workforce Information Advisory Council (WIAC) was convened for a virtual meeting at 2:00 PM on Monday, December 4, 2023. 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 day was open to the public and concluded at 4:00 PM on Monday, December 4, 2023.

#### **In Attendance:**

#### **Members of the Workforce Information Advisory Council**

Anna Hui, Missouri Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (Vice Chair)

Larry Bulman, United Association

Charisse Childers, Arkansas Department of Workforce Services

Andrew Conrad, University of Northern Iowa Institute for Decision Making

Ginger Crawford, Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

Bruce Ferguson, CareerSource Northeast Florida

Chris Kim, Workday

Julia Lane, New York University

Adam Leonard, Texas Workforce Commission

Angelina Nguyen, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development

Bob Uhlenkott, Oregon Employment Department

**Members of the Council Not in Attendance**

Lesley Hirsch, New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development (Chair)

Corretta Pettway, Ohio Department of Job and Family Services

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

**Staff**

Steve Rietzke, Chief, DNPTTA, ETA (DFO)

Kevin Cooksey, BLS

Don Haughton, ETA

Emily Krutsch, BLS

Lucas Arbulu, ETA

Kirk Mueller, BLS

Lauren Fairley, ETA

Cynthia Forland, Forland Consulting

Pam Frugoli, ETA

Annette Summers, The GA Team

Danielle Kittrell, ETA

Betsy Roberts, The GA Team

Julie Hatch, Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS)

**Others Attending for All or a Portion of the Meeting**

Jenni Eisenbarth Porter, Nevada Department of Employment, Training, and Rehabilitation

Bryan Grady, South Carolina Department of Employment and Workforce

Douglas Holmes, Strategic Services on Unemployment & Workers' Compensation (UWC)

John Karsten, George Washington University

Horacio Lopez Montes, Texas Workforce Commission

Kathleen Smith, Strada Education Foundation

**Proceedings: December 4, 2023 2:00 PM ET**

**Welcome, Review of Agenda, and Goals for Meeting**

**MR. RIETZKE** convened the meeting of the Workforce Information Advisory Council (WIAC). He thanked the Council members and staff for their attendance at the meeting and provided opening remarks on the agenda for the day in addition to the objectives for the second meeting of the new iteration of the WIAC. He shared that a large portion of the meeting will be devoted to brainstorming and that he was eager to hear from the Council members and their perspectives on how they use labor market information (LMI).

**MR. RIETZKE** introduced Council Vice Chair, **Anna Hui**.

**MS. HUI** welcomed the Council members and thanked them for joining. She stated that today's meeting would focus on foundational pieces of information as it relates to LMI. **MS. HUI** reminded the Council members that all members are starting from different places and perspectives regarding their familiarity with LMI and how it's used and collected. **MS. HUI** stated that one of the priorities for her and WIAC Chair, **MS. HIRSCH** is ensuring the

Council members are comfortable with thinking of the art of the possible. She asked the Council members to help each other and support each other in the conversations that take place during the meeting today.

## **Refresh on Workforce and Labor Market Information (WLMI) and the Workforce Information Advisory Council's (WIAC) Role**

**Cynthia Forland, Forland Consulting**, facilitated an overview of the background of WLMI and how to frame the WIAC's work in that context. She reiterated **MS. HUI's** sentiments in that each member has a different level of experience with LMI; therefore, the goal for this portion of the meeting is to provide a level-setting exercise.

**MS. FORLAND** shared a collection of documents on the screen and provided a brief review of each document.

The collection of documents and access links are as follows:

- Defining Labor Market Information (LMI) and LMI Customers
  - [https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/ETA/wioa/pdfs/Defining\\_LMI-LMI\\_Institute.pdf](https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/ETA/wioa/pdfs/Defining_LMI-LMI_Institute.pdf)
- 2023 WIAC Charter
  - [https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/ETA/wioa/pdfs/WIAC\\_Charter-2023.pdf](https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/ETA/wioa/pdfs/WIAC_Charter-2023.pdf)
- National LMI Infrastructure
  - <https://www.lmiontheweb.org/what-we-do/the-national-lmi-infrastructure/>
- Overview of Bureau of Labor Statistics LMI Products
  - [https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/ETA/wioa/pdfs/BLS\\_Overview\\_of\\_LMI\\_products.pdf](https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/ETA/wioa/pdfs/BLS_Overview_of_LMI_products.pdf)
- WIAC Opportunities Infographic
  - [https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/ETA/wioa/pdfs/2016\\_WIAC\\_Opportunities\\_Infographic.pdf](https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/ETA/wioa/pdfs/2016_WIAC_Opportunities_Infographic.pdf)
- WIAC Informational Report (short version)
  - [https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/ETA/wioa/pdfs/2016\\_WIAC\\_Informational\\_Report\\_\(short\).pdf](https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/ETA/wioa/pdfs/2016_WIAC_Informational_Report_(short).pdf)
- WIAC Informational Report (full version)
  - [https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/ETA/wioa/pdfs/2016\\_WIAC\\_Informational\\_Report\\_\(full\).pdf](https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/ETA/wioa/pdfs/2016_WIAC_Informational_Report_(full).pdf)

## **Brainstorming Topics of Interest**

**MS. FORLAND** led the Council members through an interactive brainstorming session. She asked the members to consider potential ideas and topics of interest for future inquiry over a set of 5 different category prompts. To better inform the discussion, she utilized the WebEx Whiteboard feature where the Council members posted sticky notes under each of the 5 different prompts.

In the activity that followed, the group interactively brainstormed topics and ideas that they wished to explore further.

The 5 category prompts and the resulting ideas and topics of interest are as follows:

### **Brainstorming Topic #1: Using data more effectively to advance key policy goals.**

- How to help the unemployed find a job.
- How to better fund the LMI system at the federal, state, and local government levels.
- Providing local workforce development board with useful information as they determine their funding priorities.

- Better funding to track skilled trades workers, apprentices, and journey-workers.
- How to better connect employers directly to skilled labor.
- Assist job seekers with career planning.
- Help employers find the talent they need.
- How to tell the story of why LMI is important to a variety of stakeholders like Congress and other appropriators and funders.
- Using LMI information in collaboration with private employers and industry databases.
- How to better utilize the community survey information to find those who are unemployed but seeking employment.
- Importance of vacancy surveys.
- Provide useful WLMI data where feasible for small geographic areas like rural counties.
- Interagency data sharing.
- Finding a way at the federal level to collectively enhance administrative records with demographic data.
- Transition from separate education and workforce systems into a singular integrated system.
- Integrate WLMI in our school systems to address the shrinking workforce.
- Reform the system to be more responsive, local, and actionable.
- Reduce redundancy in data collection between WLMI and other federal statistical services.
- Support joint problem solving across states.
- Provide clear examples of how LMI data can be used to support key legislative actions – e.g., CHIPS and Science; Infrastructure and Jobs; Inflation Reduction Act all identify workforce and quality jobs as high priority – so focus on measuring job quality using e.g., UI wage records and QCEW.
- Since the focus of the policies are largely local and regional, and time sensitive, build up the networks of state labor market agencies so that they can directly respond at the local level and learn what works from each other (since, as Brandeis said, states are the laboratories of democracy).
- Build training classes to teach state agency staff how to create useful measures – e.g., job quality – using the regional state collaboratives.
- Connect to other agencies – e.g., Department of Education (particularly the SLDS), NSF, HHS – through the WIG vehicle, since the mission of other agencies are often key policy drivers for using labor market information.
- Play to the strengths of the data - e.g., creative ways to show how federal investments in R&D affect local labor markets (e.g., <https://new.nsf.gov/tip/updates/nsf-pilot-assess-impact-strategic-investments-regional-jobs>).

### **Brainstorming Topic #2: Identifying opportunities for and overcoming barriers to increased data sharing.**

- Develop Model DSAs between agencies/systems.
- The confluence of state and federal statute and interpretation.
- Identify best practices of data sharing between states and between agencies and other organizations.
- This has been a topic since the inception of WIAC. What progress has been made so far and what are the biggest hurdles?
- Identify conflicts in federal law that could inform modernization of data sharing.
- Awareness of data that already exists and how to access available data.
- Need to examine federal and state law confidentiality.

- Federal laws that are interpreted by lawyers as prohibiting data-sharing.
- Identify common questions/problems that states and federal government want to answer using LMI data.
- Perceived and Real Risk.
- Utilize secure repositories to allow safe data merging and research.
- Federally leveraged partnerships to obviate those risks.
- Allowing private sector partners with government to share data both ways while balancing the concern of monetizing government data.
- Best practices and examples of successes to generate interest and enthusiasm.
- Maintaining protections of individual level data while broadening ability to share data in de-identified manners.
- Marketing effort to share the technologies that allow safe and secure data sharing and matching.
- Data sharing must be value driven. So, identify policy driven reasons for data sharing.
- Secure enclaves like the Administrative Data Research Facility at Coleridge.
- Tiered access modalities.
- Make use of the National Secure Data Service authorized in CHIPS and Science.

### **Brainstorming Topic #3: Improving access to and presentation of data for customers.**

- Promote development of common products that can be easily replicated and deployed by others.
- Is it worthwhile to try and replicate what companies such as JobsEQ and LightCast provide?
- Better connect LMI data with social service data to better gauge social impact.
- Different views of data by differing data user needs.
- Tools such as Tableau make it easier to visualize.
- Data visualizations that help tell a story to specific stakeholder perspectives.
- Develop 508 compliance training and guides to ensure visualizations are available for all.
- Provide useful background information and user instructions for data users with varied skill levels for the laity.
- Enhance the ease of access for data users with varied skill levels.
- Develop a more explicit feedback loop for those who provide data and show them value proposition.
- Searchable pages that allow for the public to do ad hoc reporting and data visualizations on their own.
- Brief members of the press about what the data means and does not mean.
- Enhance the ability to download data seamlessly and easily.
- Create GenAI-based interface for interacting with data to answer questions.
- Integrate with “reality check” tools that help contextualize data around things like Self-Sufficient Wage levels.
- Share successful programs, policies, and data more accessible. Web based.
- Mine the use of tools to identify where people seem to give up or get stuck to refine the tools and improve usability.
- Statistical significance / confidence intervals for ‘out on a limb’ vendor data.
- Continuous survey of customers, including employers, workers/claimants, and policy makers.
- Better tools to understand and distinguish in-demand, high skill, high wage data as states determine alignment of credentials with jobs.

- We are getting asked about this and the relative household information that influences what we call high wage jobs.

#### **Brainstorming Topic #4: Expanding and improving the currency and relevance of data on skills.**

- Employer validated skills taxonomy (like SkillsEngine.org).
- Develop a system for identifying changes in skill demands and identifying emerging skills to help education/training better meet changing demands.
- Tie into credential data.
- Identify best practices of how skills data has been effectively used to assist individuals and employers.
- Identify the challenges/ limitations of gathering and using skills data to ensure data users are appropriately aware of the limitations.
- Skills data in an easy to use and understandable way for students to make informed decisions about their career planning.
- Create more uniform standards to understand what skills are attributed to credentials, like how skills from apprenticeships are well-established.
- Improved communication and data collection across apprenticeship programs, community colleges and trade/career centers.
- AI or big data on large databases like the NLX are the way to go here. Too many, many-to-many relationships in mapping KSA.
- Finding patterns between Classification of Instructional Programs (degrees/trainings) and KSA.
- Better access to / integration of National Student Clearinghouse data.
- Explore how LMI data can inform training and growing industries (climate/sustainability, AI).
- How do we better incorporate non-traditional worker populations into skills discussion (re-entry, disabled, retirees, etc.) and into LMI data more broadly.
- Are there more global standards to skills that we should be incorporating so U.S. workers are globally competitive?
- Examine the status of testing to determine skills. Are employer demands being met?
- Tie to education non-completer information and compare earnings and employment duration of completers to non-completers.
- Should we consider how states vary in licensing requirements so that skills are more portable from state to state?
- Build on state-to-state reciprocal licensing agreements.

#### **Brainstorming Topic #5: Other Topics**

- How do we convey the negative impact of privacy preserving technologies on data utility – e.g., differential privacy on LEHD?
- How do we get direct information on how data is used?
- How do we use existing data sources to enhance existing data or create new useful data tools (i.e., Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics)?
- Title 12 is a big hurdle for full integration across the broader WLMi partnership (USDOL/Census...).
- Ability to follow people, like college students and retirees, as they move out of state. Do they work? Do they move back? This impacts labor force planning.

- Develop and promote Enhanced Wage Records - Settle for GOOD, not PERFECT. Ensure we can show return on investment (ROI) build support.
- Explore (unenforced) federal rule or law to require survey participation to improve response rate (i.e., OEWS).
- Integrating OEWS in collecting occupational codes as part of the unemployment insurance administrative records system.
- How to balance additional reporting requirements to employers with the value of additional data gathered to LMI system.
- Increase Evidence-building Capacity.
- Improve data literacy.
- How are the WIAC's recommendations used?
- How do we raise the level of awareness and understanding of available WLMI data among employers, economic developers, academic researchers, etc.?
- Related to non-traditional populations, how do we better capture self-employed and GIG workers into LMI data collection/system?
- Identify ways to modernize, harmonize federal privacy standards.
- Create several Standard Eco-Devo reports that can be replicated in all states to improve user experience for multi-state employers.
- How do we get more timely, local, and actionable labor market information data?
- Increase skills transferability of military personnel and spouses to smooth transitioning into civilian workforce and/or transfer of duty station.
- How are Sovereign Nations (Tribes) different from State and Local?
- Gather direct data on how workers are faring by communicating directly with the American worker.
- How can we clearly differentiate the quality of statistical data and methodologies versus. "grab and go" data produced by the private sector?

## The Role of WLMI in the States: Two Perspectives

**MS. FORLAND** shared that two Council members would discuss the role of WLMI in their states, focusing on the WLMI mission, key priorities, and how stakeholders interact with and use WLMI in their states.

**Adam Leonard, Texas Workforce Commission**, spoke first. **MR. LEONARD** stated that he has been working in workforce data for 20 years, but only in the last few years the labor market information function in Texas was moved into his division. This has given him the opportunity to have a larger role in shaping LMI and having a responsibility for it. The Texas Workforce Commission has a three-commissioner structure representing the public, employers, and labor. The Chair, who represents the public, has an economic development background and uses LMI data constantly by speaking with different populations and workgroups and informing initiatives that the agency should undertake. A major area of focus is the large gap between the jobs that require more than a high school education, but less than a four-year degree and the population that fits within that gap. The Texas Workforce Commission has been doing a great deal of work trying to close that gap using LMI. For example, educating students and families on education and work opportunities that exist in that space. **MR. LEONARD** highlighted the importance of having a system that is responsive to the needs of employers and changing needs of employers. To conclude, **MR. LEONARD** shared that his group is also responsible for evidence-based research to identify best practices and approaches to service delivery that can have effects on the outcomes of workers and employers whom they serve.

**David Schmidt, Nevada Department of Employment, Training, and Rehabilitation**, spoke second. Due to **MR. SCHMIDT** being unable to attend the meeting he prerecorded his comments. The video was played during the virtual meeting.

**MR. SCHMIDT** spoke about his experience as a labor market information director and how his agency works with numerous employment and data programs. He uses a great deal of data from the Unemployment Insurance program in his state and it helps to support the agency's core BLS programs that most labor market information directors manage: the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) program and the Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) program. Employment and wage record data is used from the QCEW. It's used to build out foundational data programs in the state in order to have detailed employment and wage information organized by industry and area. That data goes on to further supplement the Current Employment Statistics (CES) program as well as the sample base for the Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics (OEWS) program. **MR. SCHMIDT** concluded by sharing that another major focal program is the Workforce Information Grants to States (WIGS). WIGS are a flexible funding source that help to fund short- and long-term employment projections, information about occupational licensing, employment reports, and training for workforce staff in the use of LMI that is produced and made public.

**MR. SCHMIDT**'s video remarks and a corresponding transcript of the video are available at: <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/wioa/wiac/meetings>

**MS. FORLAND** thanked **MR. LEONARD** and **MR. SCHMIDT** for their informative remarks.

## Public Comment

**MR. RIETZKE** opened the platform for the public attendees to ask questions and provide comments and feedback. No public attendees requested to speak.

## Approach to WIAC Work, Next Steps, and Closing

Before closing the meeting, **MS. FORLAND** provided an overview of how WIAC subcommittees function. **MS. FORLAND** explained that subcommittees are another way for the WIAC members to connect and accomplish work outside of the formal WIAC meetings. In the past, subcommittees were formed around specific topic areas when a group of members were interested in discussing and researching specific topics further. Subcommittees then report information, advice, conclusions, and recommendations back to the full committee for discussion. Most subcommittees consist of 3 – 5 Council members.

**MR. RIETZKE** announced that after extensive polling, the in-person meeting has been scheduled for Tuesday, February 6<sup>th</sup> and Wednesday, February 7<sup>th</sup>, 2024. The GA Team will be reaching out to all members in the weeks to come to share information on travel, accommodations, and the draft agenda for the upcoming meeting.

**MS. HUI** thanked the Council members for their great participation and engagement during the brainstorming session. She is looking forward to meeting everyone during the in-person meeting.

The meeting was adjourned.