

August 24, 2021

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Dear Workforce Information Advisory Council/WIAC:

Just like the infrastructure of our nation's Roads, Bridges, Climate, and Education systems are showing age, potholes, and weakened core framework, the recent pandemic has highlighted the frail parts of our national, regional, state, and local system of producing/analyzing key information and metrics. These vital components are needed to furnish legislators, key policy makers, and labor market participants evidence based, and data driven information systems to support informed decision making in local labor markets. These tools are instrumental where the job seekers live and for the employers have their business locations.

Over the past several decades, employment and training support for accurate, timely, and effective labor market and occupational statistics/analysis has been uneven and not consistent when needed. There were a few times when the Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Workforce Information Council, National Association of State Workforce Agencies, C2ER Labor Market Training Institute, individual states, private sector data producers, and other entities made some collective efforts to make a difference. However, this lack of a sustainable effort to produce an even playing field and effective labor market/occupational information system to help employment & training stakeholders, employers, and public have the continuous real time tools to make sound career decisions.

Having been involved for over 48 years in the employment and training system (at the national, regional, state, & local levels), I have seen the best and worst of times. Members of the predecessor group of Workforce Information Council members (when they were replaced in 2016 by your newly constituted WIAC entity) sent several suggested recommendations in late 2015 to DOL & BLS officials on how to improve the WLMi system.

I am very encouraged by the WIAC's efforts in the past several months, particularly the two papers – a) Funding for State/Local WLMi Capacity Subcommittee Expedited Recommendations, 2021; and b) Enhanced UI Wage Records Subcommittee Expedited Recommendations, 2020. I applaud these efforts and hope the WIAC (and DOL & BLS) will work to implement these and other changes to improve our labor market/occupational information system.

With the economic and labor market structural changes because of the pandemic impact of the past two years, we as a nation and local labor market areas must evolve to better prepare our existing and future workforce!

Therefore, I strongly encourage the Workforce Information Advisory Council to continue their efforts to improve the data quality, analytical ability, core labor market/occupational information, and funding of workforce labor market information.

All the best,

*Gary Crossley*

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