Workforce Information Advisory Council
Summary of In-Person Meeting
September 10, 2024
9:00 AM – 4:30 PM ET

The Workforce Information Advisory Council (WIAC) was convened for an in-person meeting at 9:00 AM on Tuesday, September 10, 2024. 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 4:30 PM on September 10, 2024.

In Attendance:

Members of the Workforce Information Advisory Council

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

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

Chris Kim, Workday

Bruce Ferguson, CareerSource Northeast Florida

Julia Lane, Wagner School of Public Policy, New York University

Adam Leonard, Texas Workforce Commission

Angelina Nguyen, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development

Corretta Pettway, Ohio Department of Job and Family Services

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

Bob Uhlenkott, Oregon Employment Department

Staff

Steve Rietzke, Chief, DNPTTA, ETA (DFO)	Robert Sonoi Omwenga , ETA
Don Haughton, ETA	Julie Hatch Maxfield, BLS
Lucas Arbulu, ETA	Kirk Mueller, BLS
Heidi Casta, ETA	Emily Krutsch, BLS
Lauren Fairley, ETA	Ken Robertson, BLS
Pam Frugoli, ETA	Cynthia Forland, Forland Consulting
Danielle Kittrell, ETA	Annette Summers, The GA Team
Emily Thomas, ETA	Torrie Nickerson, The GA Team
Kim Vitelli, ETA	Sheila Crowley, The GA Team
Teresa Theis, /ETA	

Others Attending for All or a Portion of the Meeting

Andy Blanke, NIU Center for Governmental Studies
Yvette Chocolaad, National Association of State Workforce Agencies
Emilie Doerksen, KDOL
Ryan Murphy, Iowa Workforce Development
Reima Nasser, Michigan Center for Data and Analytics

Proceedings: September 10, 2024, 9:00 AM ET

Welcome, Review of Agenda, and Goals for Meeting Series

MR. RIETZKE, Designated Federal Official (DFO), ETA and Chair convened the meeting of the Workforce Information Advisory Council (WIAC) by welcoming everyone to day two of the meeting. He briefly reviewed the agenda for the day.

Workforce Information Advisory Council Meeting Agenda for September 9-10, 2024:
In – Person Meeting Agenda September 9-10, 2024 (dol.gov)

Discussion of Specific Edits to Draft Recommendations

MR. RIETZKE opened the discussion of specific edits to the draft recommendations and asked **Lesley Hirsch**, New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development (Chair), if she would be willing to edit in real time, as she did during the previous day's meeting.

MS. HIRSCH agreed to perform live edits to the recommendation documents.

Cynthia Forland, Forland Consulting, facilitated the discussion.

Specific Edits Discussed

- Focused on strengthening National Labor Exchange (NLx) and improving data accessibility.

    o Emphasized need for improved application programming interface (API) development and analytics capabilities.
    o Discussed making NLx data more accessible for natural language processing.
    o Proposed line item in Department of Labor (DOL) budget to fund NLx Research Hub maintenance and extensions.
    o Suggested partnering with public or private sector technology partners to clean and standardize NLx data.

- Debated approaches to involve private sector without deterring innovation.

    o Debated how to involve private sector in NLx enhancement without deterring innovation.
    o Discussed concerns about potential disengagement of private firms if NLx becomes sole focus.
    o Agreed to keep language broad to allow for various forms of public-private collaboration.

- Emphasized need for cross-state collaboration and data sharing.

    o Agreed to encourage and incentivize collaboration among state, local, and tribal entities.
    o Discussed developing standards for data sharing processes.
    o Proposed sharing not only finished products but also processes used to create them.
    o Suggested Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) and Employment and Training Administration (ETA) model replicable product development practices.

- Discussion of funding mechanisms for data initiatives, including line items in DOL budget.

    o Proposed line item in DOL budget for NLx Research Hub funding.
    o Discussed issuing competitive grants for proof-of-concept products using labor market information.
    o Suggested using Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) grants and direct underwriting to encourage adoption of innovative strategies.
    o Proposed supporting advanced data linkage and visualization techniques.

- Added language on equity considerations throughout the recommendations.
    o Agreed to add language on equity considerations in labor market data.
    o Agreed to add language on equity considerations throughout the recommendations.
    o Discussed potential placement of equity language in introduction or specific recommendations.

Workforce Labor Market Information (WLMI) from the Trenches: Two Perspectives

MS. FORLAND introduced **Angelina Nguyen**, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development and **Bob Uhlenkott**, Oregon Employment Department to discuss their perspectives on WLMI.

MS. NGUYEN gave a brief overview of her team's structure in Minnesota. She described "cradle to career" tracking through the Statewide Longitudinal Education Data System (SLEDS). She described the MET

Council that consists of seven counties in the Twin Cities metropolitan area in Minnesota. She summarized the WLMI data in Minnesota at the state and local level with the following:

WLMI Data in Minnesota

- State Level
    - o BLS data collection staff.
    - o Senior researchers, outreach teams, and regional outreach analysts.
    - o Working with Unemployment Insurance (UI) Office.
    - o Development of SLEDS that includes education data and wage records.
    - o Matching driver's license data with wage records for demographic analysis.
    - o MET Council.
- Local Level
    - o Regional analysts located in local career force offices throughout the state.
    - o Regional outreach teams serve as a public face.
        - o Offer trainings and presentations on labor market information (LMI) data interpretation and use.
        - o Provide in-depth data request support.
        - o Build local relationships with employers, school districts, and workforce development professionals to really know their region.

MS. NGUYEN explained that the audience for these programs include the Commissioner at the Department of Employment and Economic Development in Minnesota, the Governor's Office, other state agencies, such as the Office of Higher Education, the Department of Human Services, the Department of Labor and Industry, and the MET Council. She related an example of a request from the Governor's Office to report on what a family sustaining wage is in Minnesota. Her office will use the LMI data to set the bar for that goal. She also described LMI data usage for grant making purposes.

LMI Audience in Minnesota
- Governor's Office
    - o Setting goals for family sustaining wages.
- MET Council
    - o Grant making.
    - o Building infrastructure to support regional job growth.
- Media
    - o Predicting labor market trends.
    - o Focus on labor force size, participation, job growth, or loss.
- Workforce Development Stakeholders
    - o Includes workforce development boards, centers, educators, and schools.
        - ▪ LMI data is used in planning for course offerings and allocating budget to support educational programming to prepare youth for the labor market.
- Business Community

- o   Cooperation with economic development to work with employers and investors to expand business in the state.

Priorities
- Address aging population, and labor force changes
- Promote racial equity in employment

Funding Sources
- UI Office
- Workforce Development Division

Challenges
- Lacking enough race and ethnicity data
- Labor hoarding where companies hire more workers than needed to save up in the event of a labor shortage

MS. NGUYEN emphasized that in Minnesota there is a demand for local, timely, and actionable data just like in the recommendation documents that are being drafted. She then opened the floor for questions.

MS. HIRSCH applauded the structure and approach of the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development and asked if there were any artifacts available outlining this so that other states might learn from or replicate it.

MS. NGUYEN spoke about the cooperation between her office and the UI Office, which is housed in the same building. She advised building relationships and cooperating with other state government agencies to share information and resources as much as possible. She admitted that luck and an unexpected budget surplus has been helpful as well.

MS. FORLAND opened the floor to **MR. UHLENKOTT** to speak about Oregon.

WLMI Data in Oregon

MR. UHLENKOTT briefly discussed the modernization efforts in the Oregon Employment Department and spoke a bit about the similarities in structure with Minnesota. He shared the mission statement for his agency as "to develop and distribute quality workforce and economic information to promote informed decision making." He described some of the strengths and weaknesses of the workforce supply and demand in Oregon.

Oregon's LMI system and data partnerships
- Modernizing unemployment insurance benefits, tax systems, and employment services.
- Research division sits at the executive table, aligning with the agency's mission.
- There are 20 data sharing contracts for matching individual data, and 50 to 60 agreements for aggregate data.
- Quarterly benchmarking of employment estimates for all counties.
- Conducts quarterly job vacancy survey.
- Operates qualityinfo.org website, integrating LMI with job search functionality.
  - o   The website connects job availability with education and training requirements.

- Oregon is interested in matching driver's license data with wage records for demographic analysis like Minnesota but faces interpretation challenges of federal statute.
- Emphasized the need for better race and ethnicity data.

Career pathway analysis
- Oregon uses connections between occupations for on-ramps and off-ramps in career pathways.
- Discussion of potential use of artificial intelligence (AI) and large datasets to improve career pathway analysis.

Labor market outcome measurement
- Oregon's Performance Reporting Information System (PRISM) tracks outcomes and earnings for various workforce programs.
  - System includes partnerships with multiple state agencies and educational institutions.

MR. UHLENKOTT named partnerships with the Department of Human Services, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Rehabilitation, Unemployment Insurance, workforce boards, Employment Services, Higher Education Coordinating Commission, Department of Education, Bureau of Labor and Industries, and apprenticeship programs.

Oregon's International LMI collaborations
- Taiwan delegation visited Oregon to discuss workforce service system and LMI.
- Oregon presented to the World Bank about their LMI system.
- Oregon team gave a presentation in Spanish to Uruguay and Argentina.

MS. FORLAND thanked **MR. UHLENKOTT** for his presentation and clarified the plan for the lunch break and public comment with **MS. HIRSCH** and **MR. RIETZKE**. **MR. RIETZKE** confirmed that no one had requested to make public comments.

MS. HIRSCH suggested using the remaining time before the break to continue editing. Council members discussed race and ethnicity data as vital and named North Carolina as the only state that currently collects this data from driver's license applications. Council members discussed including language in the recommendation documents that would make this data available in every state.

BLS Presentation

MS. FORLAND introduced **Emily Krutsch**, BLS, to give an update on the recent release of 2023-2033 Employment Projections and new skills data products. She shared a PowerPoint slideshow to illustrate her presentation.

BLS employment projections release
- Released August 29, 2024, with five Excel data tables, 17 Hypertext Mark Up Language (HTML) tables for skills categories.
- Skills data covers 832 detailed occupations with skill scores on a one to five scale.
- Data available on BLS website under Employment Projections data dropdown.
- Plans to integrate skills data into Occupational Outlook Handbook.

New BLS skills data products
- Seventeen skills categories developed, each mapping to four to ten O*NET elements.
- Focused on simple, plain language categories accessible to kindergarten to twelfth grade students.
- Skill scores based on O*NET importance ratings, not using level data currently.

- Considering future enhancements like incorporating skill level data.
- Aiming for data useful to students, job seekers, employers, and other stakeholders.

MS. FORLAND opened the floor for questions.

MR. KIM expressed an alignment with the skills strategy at Workday and the private sector with the Employment Projections and new skills data products.

MS. HIRSCH asked for clarification regarding whether the 17 areas were used in the O*NET framework.

MS. KRUTCH confirmed that the categories are new and were developed in cooperation with data users and career counselors with a focus on simplicity, accessibility, and plain language. She further elaborated that BLS wanted to leverage what O*NET was already doing and create something at a higher level that anyone can successfully use.

MR. UHLENKOTT asked if historical projections are available to compare and see what has changed.

MS. KRUTSCH reiterated that the main goal was to release the data and find out more about data users' experiences.

Don Haughton, ETA provided a heads up about the upcoming WorkforceGPS webinar in October that will include a longer presentation dedicated to the 2023-2033 Employment Projections and new skills data products. He confirmed that an official announcement will be forthcoming.

MR. RIETZKE thanked **MS. KRUTSCH** for presenting. He then confirmed that there were no requests for public comment. Seeing no requests for public comment, he suggested that the group return to the editing process before turning towards future business.

MS. FORLAND advised that it seemed unlikely that the WIAC would be able to vote on the recommendation documents during the meeting. She suggested scheduling follow-up sessions and providing feedback through the subcommittees.

MR. RIETZKE advised that another public meeting would need to be held. He confirmed that the meeting could be virtual.

Council members discussed potential dates for follow-up meetings.

MS. FORLAND reopened the discussion of editing the recommendations documents.

MS. LANE directed the group to recommendations four and five that she had re-worked with **MR. LEONARD** and **MR. KIM**.

Discussion of Specific Edits to Draft Recommendations

Recommendations for WLMI improvements

- Combine previous recommendations four and five.
- Urge Secretary of Labor to invest in and champion new WLMI data sources and products.
- Emphasize working with other federal agencies like the National Science Foundation (NSF), Department of Transportation (DOT), Commerce, Education.
- Encourage investment in AI tools.
- Call for dedicated internal staff and resources at DOL to implement recommendations.

- Focus on developing timely, local, and actionable labor market data.

WIAC members continued discussing how to characterize the role of private sector partners.

Pilot development programs

- Proposed program to fund multiple pilot projects testing new WLMI approaches.
- Pilots to focus on measuring the impact of economic shocks on local labor markets.
- Should produce timely, local, actionable data on skill demands and career trajectories.
- Evaluation metrics to include timeliness, local granularity, and actionability of information as well as transparency.
- Pilots to involve partnerships among states, private sector, and other stakeholders.

Skills data collection challenges
- Current credential data on workforce customers is inefficient and not representative.
- Need for more granular, localized skills data identified.
- Suggestion to create industry-occupation matrix with skills data for each cell.
- Proposed public-private partnerships to leverage existing skill set data by industry and role.

Job quality and data collection
- Discussion on how to collect job quality data from workers.
- Challenges in reaching out to individuals versus small businesses and corporations for data.
- Need for creative approaches to capture job quality information.
- Discussion of using Application Programming Interfaces (API).

Conclusion portion
- Council members discussed more direct and concise language in the conclusion.

MS. HIRSCH asked the writing workgroup, including herself, to commit to streamlining the document and refrain from any content changes.

Council members discussed language in the appendix to avoid being overly prescriptive.

Future Areas of Focus

MS. FORLAND facilitated a discussion of future areas of focus.

Potential Future Topics of Focus
- Developing standards for product development
- Funding—in particular, cost allocation supporting data infrastructure and research
- Capturing remote work
- Self-employment/gig economy (including the "who" and what skills they possess)
- Job quality from the worker perspective
- Certifications/licensure/credentials of workforce supply
- Forecasting demand
- Regional clusters
- DOL Chief Evaluation Office Research Agenda

- Accessibility/visualization of federal data
- Concept of "temporary" jobs, which are standard in the trades
- Data analytics training classes focused on product development at community college and high school levels
- Focus on specific funding sources/programs (e.g., Department of Defense (DOD), CHIPS and Science Act, Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), Veteran's Affairs (VA), and institutional education)
- Approach other federal agencies about what DOL has/can do
- Sector focus—particularly on occupations and skills
- Bringing health services data into state longitudinal data systems
- Explore alternative data sources, both public: Internal Revenue Service (IRS), National Directory of New Hires (NDNH); and private: cell phone, credit cards, and ADP
- Enhance wage records with a focus first on large employers
- Guidance on sharing UI wage records
- Firm-level longitudinal data system
- Catalog data haves/have nots
- Impact of AI
- Explore skills adjacency using the Department of Defense (DOD) workforce
- Bring in partners to discuss what each organization is doing like the LMI Institute, National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA).

Closing and Next Steps

MR. RIETZKE outlined the proposed plan for future meetings.

MS. FORLAND suggested that Council members participate in an online poll for members to vote on the top three focus areas for next year.

- Council members are encouraged to send additional ideas to **MR. RIETZKE** for inclusion in the poll.
- The group discussed potential to catalog ongoing state and organizational data initiatives to avoid duplication of efforts.

Proposed Future Meetings:

- Virtual Meeting on November 6, 2024, from 3:00 PM - 5:00 PM EST to vote on finalized recommendations
- In-person Meeting in early 2025
  - o Ideally Tuesday/Wednesday timeframe
  - o Week of January 27, 2025, or week of February 3, 2025

The meeting was adjourned.