Workforce Information Advisory Council
Summary of In-Person Meeting
February 6, 2024
9:00 AM – 5:00 PM ET

The Workforce Information Advisory Council (WIAC) was convened for an in-person meeting at 9:00 AM on Tuesday, February 6, 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 5:00 PM on Tuesday, February 6, 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

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

Members of the Council Not in Attendance

Ginger Crawford, Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

Chris Kim, Workday

Invited Speakers

Brent Parton, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, Employment and Training Administration (ETA)

William Wiatrowski, Acting Commissioner, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS)

Staff

Steve Rietzke, Chief, DNPTTA, ETA (DFO)	Julie Hatch Maxfield, BLS
Don Haughton, ETA	Kirk Mueller, BLS
Lucas Arbulu, ETA	Emily Krutsch, BLS
Heidi Casta, ETA	Ken Robertson, BLS
Lauren Fairley, ETA	Cynthia Forland, Forland Consulting
Pam Frugoli, ETA	Annette Summers, The GA Team
Danielle Kittrell, ETA	Torrie Nickerson, The GA Team
Emily Thomas, ETA	Betsy Roberts, The GA Team

Others Attending for All or a Portion of the Meeting

Arielle Hernandez, National Nurses United

Douglas Holmes, UWC Strategy

John Karsten, George Washington University

Otto Katt, Lewis-Burke Associates

Proceedings: February 6, 2024, 9:00 AM ET

Welcome, Review of Agenda, and Goals for Meeting Series

MR. RIETZKE convened the meeting of the Workforce Information Advisory Council (WIAC). He provided opening remarks on the agenda for the day in addition to the objectives for the February meeting series. The main goal for the meeting series is the formation of subcommittees. **MR. RIETZKE** thanked the Council members for traveling to Washington, D.C. to participate in the in-person meeting.

MR. RIETZKE introduced Council Chair, **Lesley Hirsch.**

MS. HIRSCH greeted the meeting attendees. She reminded the Council members how influential the WIAC can be as it relates to the improvement of the nationwide workforce and labor market information (WLMI) system and statewide systems. **MS. HIRSCH** expressed her excitement for the in-person meetings and encouraged the Council members to remember the art of the possible and to open their minds and imagination to better examine what the

WIAC can do to inform policy and program investments; career decisions for individuals; and hiring decisions for employers.

MR. RIETZKE thanked **MS. HIRSCH** for her opening remarks.

The Council members, staff, and public attendees who were present at the meeting introduced themselves.

Leadership Remarks from Guest Speakers

MR. RIETZKE introduced Brent Parton, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, ETA.

Brent Parton, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary thanked the WIAC for inviting him to the meeting and affirmed **MS. HIRSCH**'s opening charge for the Council members to open their minds as they begin the meeting.

MR. PARTON underscored the importance of the role of the WIAC and posed a question to the group, "What is the role of the workforce system?" **MR. PARTON** described how labor market information (LMI) is the lifeblood of the workforce system in the *Investing in America* agenda. He underscored the notion that the core thing the WIAC represents is also the workforce system and, therefore, should keep the following ETA goals in mind as they pertain to advising the Department of Labor on LMI: ensure that useable information is getting into the hands of communities and people on the ground; help design workforce partnerships and programs; help connect underrepresented workers and communities to resources and opportunities; and provide understanding on what is working and what the trends are in our labor market.

MR. PARTON further emphasized that the WIAC's role is also to assist in understanding the modernization of the WLMI systems. He provided a brief synopsis of *Investing in America's Four Pillars* and how each can facilitate the modernization.

The Four Pillars are:

- Building New Industry Partnerships
- Open Opportunities for Vulnerable Workers and Communities
- Action Today for the Future of Work
- Building a Better Care Economy

MR. PARTON concluded by challenging the WIAC to consider these pillars and what the role of WLMI is across each of these spaces as they form their recommendations. He stated that there is no more important moment than right now, as WLMI is at the forefront of all conversations regarding the formulation of a modern industrial policy. **MR. PARTON** thanked ETA for bringing the Council together.

MR. RIETZKE thanked **MR. PARTON** for his time and informative remarks.

Additional information on The Four Pillars is available at:
https://www.thegateam.com/dol-vision-2030/materials/00_Opening_Plenary-Tues_May_16_900-ETA_Vision_2030.pdf

MR. RIETZKE introduced William Wiatrowski, Deputy Commissioner, BLS.

William Wiatrowski, Deputy Commissioner, greeted the Council members and shared his excitement to announce that BLS recently welcomed Commissioner Dr. Erika McEntarfer. He is positive that she will make a visit to the WIAC meetings in the near future.

MR. WIATROWSKI provided an overview of recent publication releases at BLS: Employment Situation Summary (Jobs Report); Quarterly Employment Cost Index (ECI); and Quarterly Productivity Numbers. He shared that BLS is always putting out new and interesting data and that while much of it focuses on national indicators, they are working to increase the focus on states and local areas. BLS operates 12 surveys and they continue to work on maintaining the current response rates and preventing deterioration response through outreach.

MR. WIATROWSKI was pleased to be invited to speak with the WIAC members as one of BLS's goals is to continue partnerships with state and local areas. BLS has four federal-state programs: Current Employment Statistics (CES); Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS); Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics (OEWS); and Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW). While these programs are ongoing, BLS has added state Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey (JOLTS) data and state productivity data to these programs. The BLS Productivity Office is working on experimental data for some of the largest metropolitan areas and the public should soon be hearing more about data expansion in local areas.

MR. WIATROWSKI concluded his remarks by providing one final update on BLS participation in the Interagency Council on Statistical Policy and how it's been charged with supporting the National Secure Data Service. He shared that this is a great opportunity to provide expanded data access to state, local, and tribal data and that pilot projects have been started. **MR. WIATROWSKI** thanked the WIAC for their hard work and efforts.

MR. RIETZKE thanked **MR. WIATROWSKI** for his time and informative remarks.

Review of Past WIAC Priorities and WLMI Updates

Cynthia Forland, Forland Consulting, provided an overview of the WIAC's past priorities and recommendations. She shared the *WIAC Previous Recommendations* presentation on the screen.

MS. FORLAND stated that while this document was previously shared during the November 2023 meeting, there was a request to review it again. She informed the Council members that this document does not dictate what they should focus on, moving forward.

Following the review of the WIAC's past priorities and recommendations, **MS. FORLAND**, **MR. RIETZKE**, and **MS. HATCH MAXFIELD** each provided the Council with an update on current WLMI ecosystem updates.

MS. FORLAND provided an update on the following:

- WIOA re-authorization bill that has come out of the House Committee.
  - A call to review local areas.
  - Codifies the Workforce Data Quality Initiative (WDQI) Grants, including mentioning state credentials, multi-state data collaboratives, new state grantees, private sector data collaboration, staff capacity collaboration.
  - Authorizes flat appropriations for WLMI-related activities through 2030 at levels roughly equivalent to current funding.
- Multi-State Data Collaboratives/Coleridge Initiative
  - Supported through an administering organization at the National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA).
  - Coleridge Initiative is the platform organization that provides a secure data system where data can be shared within and across states without limiting the ability for a state to own its own data.

o   Applied data analytics training: Cohort of 4 different classes in progress; funded by ETA, Coleridge, NASWA, and the state of Arkansas. Focus specifically on state data over the course of months.

MR. RIETZKE provided an update on the following:

- WIOA State Planning Process
  o   A strategic and operational plan for the WIOA-funded system within states.
  o   Current data-driven guidance highlights planning priorities to encourage states to leverage the workforce system to support infrastructure investments that are infusing money into the economy.
  o   What can state and local areas do to support the pipeline of workers that will support the growth these infrastructure investments are expected to drive?
  o   Job quality and workforce development activities that emphasize and improve the quality of jobs.
  o   Data-driven evidence with LMI at the center.
- Workforce Information Grants to States (WIGS)
  o   States produce state-level job projections.
  o   Short-term projections of limited value may become optional depending on demand for this product in the state.
  o   WIAC has recommended twice that funding be doubled for WIGS.
  o   ETA has been able to insert budget proposals in the administration's Congressional Budget Justification; specifically, a 25% increase for WIGS. No movement in Congress, yet.
  o   Projections Management Partnership and Policy Academy Technical Assistant Model to examine data user needs, gaps, and data producer possibilities.

MS. HATCH MAXFIELD provided an update on the following from the BLS perspective:

- CPS Response Rate
  o $100 Million survey.
  o   Provides the national unemployment rate.
  o   Response rate challenges; 70% national response rate.
  o   Website to show how response rates are impacted and ways BLS is looking to address the response rates: https://www.bls.gov/cps/methods/response_rates.htm.
  o   CPS Modernization Plan – driven by potential funding and implementation.
- Other BLS Updates
  o   Divergence between survey of establishments (jobs) and household survey (people).
  o   Since the pandemic, these surveys have become further out of alignment, causing state-level difficulties.
  o   OEWS and flat funding. What options are available to help states use their resources to the fullest capacity?
  o   Commissioner McEntarfer's experience with the Census Bureau's Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) Program will likely help improve BLS.

At the conclusion of the WLMI ecosystem updates, **MR. RIETZKE** opened the floor for Council members to ask questions and share comments.

Julia Lane, Wagner School of Public Policy, New York University, shared her concerns regarding the continual flat funding to states. She recommended that the WIAC consider pivoting to a model that changes the narrative

and pushes funding to states in order to produce products that have local value in a relatively timely fashion. **DR. LANE** shared that during her time starting the LEHD, the original idea was a joint BLS-Census program where all innovation was driven by the states. She urged the WIAC to pivot so that innovation is returned to the states for various programs.

Presentation on Employment Projections (EP) Program

Emily Krutsch, BLS, briefed the WIAC on a skills analysis project titled, *Employment Projections (EP) Program*. She shared a presentation on the screen.

MS. KRUTSCH highlighted data that BLS has on data users. She shared that the majority of users who are using the Occupational Outlook Handbook (OOH) are K-12 students. With this information, BLS would like to create a skills product that is valuable to this group as they are likely thinking about planning their future careers or what to study in higher education. Ideally, a product that is simple and digestible for K-12 students. **MS. KRUTSCH** stated that her team created a framework of high-level skill categories and then mapped the O*NET variables into those categories. There are 15 initial framework categories undergoing cognitive testing.

A copy of the Employment Projections (EP) Program presentation is available at: https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/wioa/wiac/meetings.

Initial Walk-Through and Discussion of Brainstormed Topics from December 4ᵗʰ Virtual Meeting

MS. FORLAND facilitated the review of brainstormed topics of interest from the December 4ᵗʰ Virtual Meeting. Each of the five category prompts and their detailed topics of interest for future inquiry were displayed throughout the meeting room on large poster boards.

In the discussions that followed the review of each topic idea, the Council members provided immediate thoughts, comments, and feedback.

The detailed brainstormed topics are outlined in the December 4, 2024 WIAC meeting minutes on pages three through seven: https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/ETA/wioa/pdfs/December%202023%20Meeting%20Minutes.pdf

The Role of WLMI in Unions, Research Entities, and Workforce Development Boards: Three Perspectives

MS. FORLAND shared that three Council members would discuss how they interact with the WLMI system in their day-to-day work, focusing on their respective roles in research, local workforce development, and labor. **MS. FORLAND** emphasized the importance of diversity on the Council.

Julia Lane, **Wagner School of Public Policy, New York University**, spoke first. She shared a presentation on the screen titled *The Role of WLMI and Research Entities.* **DR. LANE** provided an overview of the origin and context behind the creation of the LEHD program. The initial research question was, "How can the employer and employee data be linked to better understand the dynamic interrelationship between workers and employers, so that people can find jobs, so that cities can plan transportation, etc.?" **DR. LANE** emphasized the importance of the states' role in answering the "so that" question.

DR. LANE further summarized how LEHD was the building block that later led to the creation of the Coleridge Initiative's Applied Data Analytics (ADA) training programs and then NASWA's multi-state data collaborative. She outlined the drivers behind research investments and the research needed to address social policy questions and the needs of stakeholders.

A copy of **DR. LANE**'s presentation is available at: https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/wioa/wiac/meetings

Bruce Ferguson, CareerSource Northeast Florida, spoke second. **MR. FERGUSON** shared perspectives from his role in local workforce development in the state of Florida. At the career center level, Florida makes LMI data useable so that career counselors can effectively discuss career pathways with job seekers. In the economic development area, **MR. FERGUSON** uses LMI data to project competition and skilled worker talent. **MR. FERGUSON** highlighted the diversity of Florida in that it is urban, suburban, and rural.

While Florida has WIOA funds, the state also has an umbrella of several other funding programs which makes it unique compared to many other states. **MR. FERGUSON** explained how LMI data is used to inform and develop their state plans and regional plans. From the career counselor perspective, LMI data is used to inform target industries and how training funds are used to support healthcare, advanced manufacturing, and area distribution logistics. **MR. FERGUSON** concluded by sharing examples of real-life training pathways for workers in the state of Florida as well as business services interactions and economic development.

Larry Bulman, United Association, spoke last. **MR. BULMAN** represents a national labor federation on the WIAC and spoke from the perspective of a data consumer and end user. He shared that organized labor associations are driven by data since it provides information about members, workplace conditions, and how daily work is changing for men and women. Specifically, a high quality and timely workforce labor information system assists in making decisions including the allocation of appropriate resources. Some examples of labor market information that **MR. BULMAN** reviews daily are employment and unemployment statistics, job forecasts, wages, and demographic characteristics.

MR. BULMAN referenced North America's Building Trade Unions (NABTU) and how they've successfully led collaborative efforts around the country to strengthen workforce development and assist in forging local workforce partnerships that meet the needs of employees and employers in industry sectors that are critical to local economies. These unique partnerships form the bedrock of systemic change at the community, regional, and state levels and include employers, unions, community colleges and higher education organizations, workforce investment boards, economic development organizations.

MR. BULMAN closed by sharing information about his international union, United Association. The organization spends over $220 million on annual training and those funds do not come from the government. Each laborer invests $1 to $2 per paycheck towards the future workforce and upgrade training. Unions will continue to play a huge role in reemployment of the American workforce and, in order to do this, they must be able to rely on strong and timely labor market information to make critical decisions.

MS. FORLAND thanked **DR. LANE**, **MR. FERGUSON**, and **MR. BULMAN** for their informative remarks.

Brainstormed Topics, Continued: Subcommittee Interest

MS. FORLAND introduced the next exercise to the Council members. Referencing the five categories and topics of interest for future inquiry on large poster boards, each member was given five stickers and asked to vote on their top five topic areas.

The resulting list of voted topics for subcommittee inquiry is as follows:

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

- How to better fund the LMI system at the federal, state, and local government levels.
- How to better connect employers directly to skilled labor.
- How to tell the story of why LMI is important to a variety of stakeholders like Congress and other appropriators and funders.
- Provide useful WLMI data where feasible for small geographic areas like rural counties.
- Reform the system to be more responsive, local, and actionable.
- 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. Focus on measuring job quality using UI wage records and QCEW.
    - Connect to other agencies – e.g., Department of Education (particularly the SLDS), NSF, HHS – through the WIGS vehicle, since the missions 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).
- Build training classes to teach state agency staff how to create useful measures – e.g., job quality – using the regional state collaboratives.

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

- Develop Model DSAs between agencies/systems.
- Identify common questions/problems that states and federal government want to answer using LMI data.

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.
- Better connect LMI data with social service data to better gauge social impact.
- Develop 508 compliance training and guides to ensure visualizations are available for all.
- Enhance the ease of access for data users with varied skill levels.
- Enhance the ability to download data seamlessly and easily.
- Create GenAI-based interface for interacting with data to answer questions.
- Better tools to understand and distinguish in-demand, high skill, high wage data as states determine alignment of credentials with jobs.

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

- 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 KSAs.
- Finding patterns between Classification of Instructional Programs (degrees/trainings) and KSAs.
- Explore how LMI data can inform training and growing industries (e.g., climate/sustainability, AI).

Brainstorming Topic #5: Other Topics

- Develop and promote enhanced wage records - settle for GOOD, not PERFECT. Ensure we can show return on investment (ROI) to 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.
- Related to non-traditional populations, how do we better capture self-employed and GIG workers into LMI data collection/system?

Closing and Next Steps

MR. RIETZKE thanked the Council members for their attention and contributions throughout the meeting. **MS. FORLAND** shared that she would thematically compile the voted topics in preparation for tomorrow's meeting. The first order of business tomorrow will be to review the newly compiled topics and then Council members will break into subcommittee groups.

The meeting was adjourned.