

## **Wage Record Interchange System: Advisory Group Summary Report, First Quarter 2016 Meeting**

### ***Wage Record Interchange System (WRIS) and Wage Record Interchange System 2 (WRIS2)***

*March 24, 2016*

*2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. EDT*

#### **1. Welcome and Remarks**

Karen Staha, Chief of the Division of Strategic Planning and Performance for the Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration (ETA), Office of Policy Development and Research (OPDR), welcomed representatives from the state offices of unemployment insurance and performance accountability to the WRIS and WRIS2 Advisory Group First Quarter 2016 meeting. Ms. Staha also introduced ETA staff members from OPDR, the Office of Unemployment Insurance (OUI), and the Office of the Solicitor (SOL), as well as the technical assistance contractors, Xerox and CDS<sup>2</sup>; and then briefly reviewed the discussion agenda, distributed prior to the meeting.

To conserve meeting time for the discussions, Ms. Staha asked the representatives to confirm their attendance for the state roll by sending an e-mail through [WRIS@dol.gov](mailto:WRIS@dol.gov); and, to note if they are working with their SUIA, IT, or PACIA organization.

Ms. Staha noted that on March 16 and 17, Secretary Thomas Perez had provided testimony on behalf of the Department of Labor before the respective Sub-committees of the Senate and House Committees on Appropriations and, on March 15th, before the House Committee on Education and the Workforce. The testimonies of Secretary Perez included discussion of the Department's requested budget for Fiscal Year 2017, and are available on the Department's public Web site at: <https://www.dol.gov/newsroom/congress>.

Since the Advisory Group's meeting in December 2015, ETA and the Division of Strategic Planning and Performance/OPDR have continued to issue guidance related to the full implementation of WIOA. All documents and materials for WIOA are available on ETA's WIOA Web site: <http://www.doleta.gov/WIOA/>. Ms. Staha noted most information related to performance accountability under WIOA also is posted on the Division's public Web site: <http://www.doleta.gov/performance/>.

In closing her remarks, Ms. Staha also briefly discussed the ETA Training and Employment Guidance Letter 14-15 (TEGL): *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Requirements for Unified and Combined State Plans*. TEGL 14-15 was issued on March 4, 2016.

## **2. Discussion: Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)**

Heather Parker, ETA Federal Program Officer for WRIS, WRIS2 and CRIS, noted that, in 2014 Advisory Group meetings, the representatives had requested that each quarterly meeting include a continuing discussion opportunity regarding WIOA implementation. Based on discussions led by the Departments of Education and Labor during the January 2016 National Convening in Washington, Adam Leonard (TX) had inquired about the status of the FERPA guidelines for educational and wage data sharing. Ms. Parker outlined the coordination activities between the Department of Labor and the Department of Education and said she would keep the Advisory Group updated on the progress. As an additional resource for the representatives, she recommended the Web site for the Department of Education's FERPA Family Policy Compliance Office: <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html>.

## **3. WRIS and WRIS2 Agreements Renegotiations Workgroup**

Ms. Parker introduced Scott Wheeler (Washington), the state Liaison from the Agreements Renegotiation Workgroup to the WRIS-WRIS2 Advisory Group. Mr. Wheeler is the Advisory Group PACIA representative from Washington State and serves as the Manager of Systems Performance for Washington's Employment Security Department (ESD)

Mr. Wheeler and Ms. Parker reported that representatives from 18 states, plus the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, have volunteered to participate in the discussions of the Agreements Renegotiation Workgroup, which began meeting in late October 2015. He indicated that the workgroup hopes to propose a single agreement that could replace the WRIS and WRIS2 Data Sharing Agreements and incorporate the provisions of WIOA as well as remain consistent with the requirements of FERPA, 20 CFR Part 603 and with applicable State laws. The tentative name discussed for the new Data Sharing Agreement would be the "State Wage Interchange System" (SWIS). All WRIS SUIA and PACIA staff members are invited to participate in the Agreements Renegotiation Workgroup and should indicate their interest through an e-mail to [WRIS@dol.gov](mailto:WRIS@dol.gov) or [LStevens@cds2.com](mailto:LStevens@cds2.com). Mr. Wheeler noted that representatives from the Department of Education's Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education (OCTAE) and the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) have participated in the Agreement Renegotiation Workgroup's conference calls. All workgroup members have been encouraged to invite their state core partners to join them for the monthly meetings.

## **4. WRIS2: Membership and Operations Status**

John Glen (Oregon), WRIS2 Workgroup Chair, and Ms. Parker discussed the opt-in WRIS2 expanded data sharing exchange. Mr. Glen reported that the membership of the WRIS2 interchange system now stands at 43: 41 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. The Georgia Department of Labor, the newest member, signed the WRIS2 Data Sharing Agreement in late January 2016. To assist newer Advisory Group representatives, Mr. Glen provided an overview of key provisions of the WRIS2 system and operational requirements for the SUIAs and PACIAs. He noted participation in WRIS2 is voluntary and that each member is required to sign the WRIS2 Data Sharing Agreement. Under the terms of the WRIS2 Agreement, the

PACIA can prepare aggregate statistical reports and analyses to satisfy the reporting and performance requirements under Federal or state legislation, or Federal or state regulation. The aggregate statistical reports may be provided to an approved Third Party Entity (TPE) with which the PACIA has entered into a required agreement that includes the confidentiality guidelines of the WRIS2 Agreement. Mr. Glen indicated that TPEs are defined in the Agreement as: “any public body, agency, or private career school required by law to meet state and/or Federal performance measures. A PACIA, or its agent or consultant, cannot be designated as a TPE.”

Mr. Glen confirmed that, through the WRIS2 interchange system, all confidential, individual data received remains with the designated state PACIA. Through the separate required agreement with the TPE, the PACIA develops and provides the TPE with only aggregate statistical reports. All confidential data remains with the PACIA. Mr. Glen also thanked Clinton Flowers (MO) and Adam Leonard (TX), who have served on the WRIS2 Workgroup since late 2008, for their time and continuing commitment to the success of WRIS2. In closing, Ms. Parker noted that the WRIS2 membership map, Data Sharing Agreement and state-designated Contacts are available on ETA’s public WRIS2 Web site: [http://www.doleta.gov/performance/wris\\_2.cfm](http://www.doleta.gov/performance/wris_2.cfm)

### **5. Quarterly Review of WRIS and WRIS2 Technical Operations**

Ms. Parker introduced Amanda Gohl, Account Manager for Xerox, which manages the ICON systems for WRIS, WRIS2 and UI purposes. Ms. Gohl discussed sections of the WRIS and WRIS2 *Quarterly Technical Operations Reviews* that were e-mailed to Advisory Group representatives prior to the meeting. Ms. Gohl noted that the next scheduled date for SUIAs to provide data for the Distributed Database Index (DDBI) was April 4, and that state PACIAs would be able to access the DDBI by April 11. In July, the SUIA data for the DDBI will be due by July 5, 2016. Ms. Gohl also reviewed the annual audits that Xerox will undergo for the ICON system during summer months to ensure compliance with the Federal Information Security Management Act (FISMA) and the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) guidelines. Ms. Gohl indicated that contact information for Xerox staff members was included at the close of the *Technical Reviews* and also explained that WRIS and WRIS2 members could e-mail questions and suggestions through: [WRIS@dol.gov](mailto:WRIS@dol.gov).

### **6. Additional Discussion Topics and 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2016 Meeting**

Ms. Staha inquired if there were questions or additional business to discuss prior to reviewing potential dates for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter Advisory Group meeting. Kim Heng (RI) noted that Rhode Island, as a member of WRIS2, has agreements with Third Party Entities and inquired about related terms and conditions within the developing SWIS Agreements for TPEs. In closing the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2016 meeting, Ms. Staha thanked the representatives for their commitment of time and participation in the Advisory Group discussions. She suggested the third week in June for the next quarterly meeting and requested that state representatives let ETA know, through [WRIS@dol.gov](mailto:WRIS@dol.gov), of any conflicts during that time period. The Advisory Group meeting was adjourned at 2:55 pm EDT.