

Workforce Information Advisory Council

Summary of Virtual Meeting

January 12, 2022

12:00 PM – 4:00 PM ET

The Workforce Information Advisory Council (WIAC) was convened for a virtual meeting at 12:00 PM on Wednesday, January 12, 2022. 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 Wednesday, January 12, 2022.

In Attendance:

Members of the Workforce Information Advisory Council

Bruce Madson, Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (Chair)

Alicia Crouch, Kentucky Community and Technical College System

Lesley Hirsch, New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development

Adrienne Johnston, Florida Bureau of Workforce Statistics and Economic Research

Dean Jones, Greenville County Workforce Development Board

Tamika Ledbetter, Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development

Chelsea Mason – Placek, Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO

Andrew Reamer, George Washington Institute of Public Policy, George Washington University

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

Fran Valentine, Indiana Department of Workforce Development

Jennifer Zeller, Georgia Power

Members of the Council Not in Attendance

Daryl Bassett, Arkansas Department of Workforce Services

Deborah Carlson, Texas Workforce Commission

Invited Speakers

Oriane Casale, Interim Director of the Labor Market Information Office, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development

Bill McMahon, Project Manager, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development

Amanda Rohrer, Labor Market Analyst, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development

Kevin Stapleton, Lead Actuary, Office of Unemployment Insurance, US Department of Labor

Charlie Terrell, Director, National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA)

Staff

Steve Rietzke, Chief, DNPTTA, ETA (DFO)

Ken Robertson, BLS

Don Haughton, ETA

Michael Wolf, BLS

Lauren Fairley, ETA

Cynthia Forland, Forland Consulting

Pam Frugoli, ETA

Annette Summers, The GA Team

Danielle Kittrell, ETA

Sonnie Munroe, The GA Team

Julie Hatch, BLS

Others Attending for All or a Portion of the Meeting

Katrina Bailey, MTX Group

Yvette Chocolaad, National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA)

Matthew Jensen, Indeed

Jason Palmer, BLS

Rosalinda Rivas, Moreno Valley College

Rider Rodriguez, MTX Group

Scott Sanders, National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA)

Tara Sinclair, The George Washington University

Tiffany Smith, ETA

Teresa Theis, ETA

Noel Woods, ETA

Subcommittees Reporting During this Meeting

Subcommittee Three: Worker and the Work

Andrew Reamer (Chair)

Adrienne Johnston, Florida Bureau of Workforce Statistics and Economic Research

Chelsea Mason – Placek, Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO

Proceedings: January 12, 2022 12:00 PM ET

Welcome and Review of Agenda

MR. RIETZKE convened the meeting of the Workforce Information Advisory Council (WIAC). He provided opening remarks on the agenda for the day. **MR. RIETZKE** wished the Council members a happy new year and thanked them for their participation at the meetings on December 1st and 8th.

MR. RIETZKE informed the Council members that **MR. ANDERSON** resigned his position on the Council. **MR. RIETZKE** also shared that three new members have been appointed to the Council.

The Council members who were present at the meeting introduced themselves.

MR. RIETZKE turned over the platform to Andrew Reamer.

Opening Statements

Andrew Reamer, George Washington Institute of Public Policy, George Washington University, provided opening statements and introduced the members of the Worker and the Work Subcommittee.

DR. REAMER shared that the subcommittee has been focusing on the disconnect between job vacancies and unemployed workers. **DR. REAMER** explained that the goal of the subcommittee is to reduce the magnitude of disconnections between workers and work. The subcommittee aims to examine how workforce and labor market information (WLMI) can be improved at the state and local level, leading to more effective policies and programs to help the workers and work to find each other. An additional aim of the subcommittee is to improve labor market efficiency without additional government intervention.

DR. REAMER explained that the means for reducing the magnitude of disconnections between workers and work can be achieved by improving accuracy, timeliness, and detail of various WLMI sources of opportunity at state and local levels. **DR. REAMER** shared that the subcommittee identified four WLMI sources of opportunity as key focus areas to be examined further. Each subcommittee member selected and researched a focus area and met with experts in the respective fields.

The 4 key focus areas are as follows:

- Unemployment Insurance (UI) claims
- Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey (JOLTS) and Job Vacancy Surveys
- National Labor Exchange (NLx) Research Hub and CareerOneStop
- Worker Experience in Search for Work

Featured Speaker Presentations

Throughout the featured speaker portion of the meeting, the Worker and the Work Subcommittee members briefed the meeting attendees on their selected focus area and invited experts to speak.

DR. REAMER introduced **Kevin Stapleton**, Lead Actuary, Office of Unemployment Insurance, US Department of Labor.

MR. STAPLETON spoke about potential sources of UI claims data and the characteristics of the insured unemployed.

MR. STAPLETON described weekly UI claims as an economic measurement and an administrative tool used to pay administrative funding to the states. Weekly claims data cannot be dialed down into geographic regions or individual characteristics of those who are filing claims due to the nature of how the claims-taking process works. He indicated that reporting continued weekly claims on an individual basis for a unique count of claimants would be particularly difficult.

MR. STAPLETON shared that the US Government Accountability Office (GAO) has submitted a recommendation for the Office of Unemployment Insurance to gather information on unique claimants in the UI program. A new report is currently under development to collect monthly, aggregate-level data on unique individual claimants. Once the report is finalized, it will go into the Paperwork Reduction Act clearance process, followed by a 60-day federal register notice for public comment.

Regarding characteristics of UI claimants, **MR. STAPLETON** provided information on the ETA 203, Characteristics of the Insured Unemployed report. He provided a demonstration on how to access the characteristics of the insured unemployed data from the Office of Unemployment Insurance website. **MR. STAPLETON** explained that this data is owned by states and at this time there are no agreements with states to provide additional information at the federal level. A significantly limiting factor of the data is the inability to cross-reference and match across categories.

In conclusion, **MR. STAPLETON** informed the meeting attendees that that Office of Unemployment Insurance received a significant amount of funding through the American Rescue Plan Act legislation in order to improve the UI program. An area of focus is improving equity in the program. There are grant opportunities for states to request funds to assess and improve equity in their state systems. These grants allow states to work with the Chief Evaluation Office to identify where gaps and inequitable outcomes exist in the program and to find resolutions to overcome them.

Adrienne Johnston, Florida Bureau of Workforce Statistics and Economic Research spoke on the JOLTS and Job Vacancy Surveys focus area. **MS. JOHNSTON** shared that while online job ads data is a rich and timely resource for understanding demand, the full scope of state job vacancies is still lacking. She explained that state-level JOLTS data can expose the gaps, therefore the next step is getting more detail from a data series that is reliable like JOLTS.

MS. JOHNSTON introduced **Julie Hatch**, Associate Commissioner for Employment and Unemployment Statistics, Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).

MS. HATCH presented on the current status of JOLTS and future expansion of the data series. She outlined three products that BLS utilizes from JOLTS to measure job vacancies: Job Openings; Labor Supply from the Household Survey; and Separations, Quits, and Hires. **MS. HATCH** shared that BLS began to release state-level JOLTS data in November 2021. This was achieved by using model-based data comprised of current resources and existing samples. She addressed the difficulties in implementing expansion of sample-based, state JOLTS estimates and surveying Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSA). She explained that significant funding resources are required in order to implement both due to doubling the current JOLTS sample size and needing additional analysts to conduct reviews.

MS. HATCH concluded by sharing that the November JOLTS National Data was released on Tuesday, January 4, 2022, and the December Employment Situation was released on Friday, January 7, 2022. She explained the importance of the cohesiveness in releasing the data in order to avoid a disconnect.

MS. JOHNSTON introduced **Oriane Casale**, Interim Director of the Labor Market Information Office, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development.

MS. CASALE presented on the Minnesota Job Vacancy Survey and the key products the state produces as a result of the rich data they are able to collect. She provided background information on the fielding frequency of the survey, publication estimates, and the sample size. **MS. CASALE** shared that job vacancy estimates and characteristics include: occupation, the number of job vacancies, job vacancy rate, part time, full time, temporary or seasonal, post-secondary education requirements, experience level requirements, certification or license requirements, and median wage offer.

MS. CASALE identified the fielding of a job vacancy survey as both labor and technology intensive. In order to produce reliable results representing the total population of employers for over 550 occupations in 6 regions of Minnesota, a sample of over 7,000 UI-covered establishments is needed each time the survey is fielded, resulting in over 30,000 rows of data. Data collection methods include: paper surveys, online surveys, over the phone, individual company websites, and automated data scraping from large companies. Follow up with employers is also required in order to ensure a minimum response rate of 70%. The data then needs to be checked, edited and coded using automated tools and analysts for accuracy.

MS. CASALE explained that the results of the Minnesota job vacancy survey inform several key career search and exploration tools that are widely used by students, job seekers, and career counselors in the state. **MS. CASALE** identified the Occupations in Demand Tool (OID) as one of the key products produced as a result of the data collected. OID links to other useful information like typical wage, long-term employment outlook, training or degree requirements and schools that offer training programs for each occupation.

Lastly, **MS. CASALE** shared that while the survey does not have “ear-marked” funding, the Labor Market Information Office works extremely hard to maintain the survey due to its incredible value to the state. The Workforce Information Grant to States (WIGS) and other resources are pieced together to maintain funding.

DR. REAMER introduced **Charlie Terrell**, Director, National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA), **Bill McMahon**, Project Manager, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development, and **Amanda Rohrer**, Labor Market Analyst, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development.

MR. TERRELL shared a presentation on the history, goals, objectives, current users, and the current status of the NLx Research Hub.

MR. TERRELL outlined the key constituents of the NLx: employers, job seekers, state workforce agencies, and the federal government and nonprofits. The objective of the Research Hub is to maintain a hub of real-time information to support the workforce development system. The hub’s raw data users are state LMI shops, academic

researchers, and in the future, other organizations that may develop products using job posting data which will ultimately support end users like job seekers, employers, and policymakers. **MR. TERRELL** provided details on the key attributes of the Research Hub. Real-time data, one of the key attributes, leads to high-quality job feed, increased accessibility and most importantly, transparency on where the data originates.

MR. TERRELL shared a listing of current NLx Research Hub users and provided an outline of 5 objectives regarding the current status of the NLx Research Hub.

The 5 objectives and current status are as follows:

- Objective 1: Complete technical infrastructure.
 - Status: Data warehouse modernization completed July 2021.
- Objective 2: Share the data with the researchers.
 - Status: Began sharing data via synchronous and asynchronous APIs in September 2021.
- Objective 3: Explore LMI use cases.
 - Status: NASWA will facilitate a state pilot starting in 2022.
- Objective 4: Develop training materials.
 - Status: API sample code complete. Currently developing FAQ documents, with case studies and white papers to come.
- Objective 5: Develop data visualizations and standard queries for the public.
 - Status: Developing dashboards in collaboration with outside partners; will launch in 2022.

In conclusion, **MR. TERRELL** discussed opportunities and ideas which the Department of Labor and the WIAC could provide support to the NLx.

The opportunities and ideas are as follows:

- Support NLx partnership broadly.
 - Affirm support for the NLx as the public-private labor exchange system for the U.S. in accordance with the Wagner-Peyser requirement for a nationwide labor exchange system.
 - Encourage NASWA member agencies to write procurement documents for state labor exchange products and services with reference(s) to the NLx feed as a required interface and/or component for batch processing.
 - Ensure regulations do not constrain, restrict, or otherwise limit a state's role in the public-private partnership and state labor exchange systems.
- Promote researchers' use of the NLx Research Hub.
 - Provide information about the NLx Research Hub to researchers seeking job posting data.
 - To the extent possible, connect private entities with NLx Research Hub team that might use NLx data for long-term research projects.

MR. MCMAHON presented on how CareerOneStop has integrated with, and used NLx. He shared that CareerOneStop is a suite of websites and mobile applications sponsored by DOL with the primary goal of helping connect job seekers with jobs.

MR. MCMAHON explained that CareerOneStop has been using NLx for job search since 2008. Currently, CareerOneStop is using NLx for three major activities. First, using the NLx API for real-time job searches. Second, for identifying and publishing in demand certifications. Third, to enhance job search features and functionality. **MR. MCMAHON** demonstrated how to utilize advanced filters on the job search page of the CareerOneStop website. He also provided an example of how to use the in-demand certification finder.

MR. MCMAHON stated that not only do they want users to be able to see in demand certifications, but also to learn of opportunities in their own communities where users might be able to connect with a certifying entity. He noted that the training exchange systems have a disconnect.

Chelsea Mason-Placek, Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO briefed the meeting attendees on the concept of developing objective data sources about the worker experience in trying to secure jobs or advance in their careers, and using that data to help close the divide between available workers and open jobs.

MS. MASON-PLACEK shared that currently, the existing WLMI data in the subcommittee's arena is largely supported by information from employers and relates to the experience of companies in hiring, movement of workers, and open positions. She explained the opportunity in examining the worker experience as a means to identify barriers and labor market tensions and trends that contribute to jobs remaining unfilled, qualified workers and/or workers with aptitude for a job being overlooked, and workers being discouraged from applying.

MS. MASON-PLACEK identified examples of barriers that could be better identified, tracked and addressed using WLMI tools. A few of which include: reluctance to hire older workers, reluctance to hire the formerly incarcerated, arbitrary credential requirements, credit screening, and irregular work history. **MS. MASON-PLACEK** reframed the barriers as data points by location, occupation, and industry in order to better highlight how this data can be used to facilitate connecting job seekers with jobs.

MS. MASON-PLACEK outlined ideas for potential data sources where objective worker experience data could be added. **MS. MASON-PLACEK** concluded by making a recommendation that the U.S. Secretary of Labor utilize department expertise to explore opportunities and identify needed investments to better understand the workers' experience in finding work, and barriers and trends in hiring, via available public WLMI sources and new public/private partnerships. The objective being to use this data to better facilitate meaningful and mutually beneficial connections between open jobs and available workers.

DR. REAMER thanked the featured speakers for their time and thoughtful comments.

Large Group Discussion

MS. FORLAND facilitated the large group discussion on the reactions to the subcommittee presentations. She encouraged the Council members to consider the responses from the featured speakers and contemplate the ideas

that **DR. REAMER** and the subcommittee members presented. **MS. FORLAND** asked the Council members for their thoughts and comments on the key points shared by the subcommittee.

In the discussion that followed, the Council members asked questions and shared ideas on reducing the magnitude of disconnections between workers and work.

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. **MR. RIETZKE** requested that the public attendees send a request in advance of the next meeting if they would like to address the Council.

Subcommittee Presentation of Recommendations to the Secretary

MS. FORLAND facilitated the discussion on proposed recommendations and next steps as presented by the Worker and the Work Subcommittee and the featured speakers. **MS. FORLAND** encouraged the Council members to consider additional recommendations that could ultimately improve the match between workers and work.

In the conversation that followed, the Council members brainstormed and debated potential recommendations and next steps for each of the 4 focus areas.

The 4 focus areas and corresponding recommendations and next steps are as follows:

- Unemployment Insurance Claims
 - Developing new monthly aggregate report by unique individual/program
 - Adding occupation to existing monthly UI report
 - Competitive grant opportunity for states to address inequity
- JOLTS/Job Vacancy Surveys
 - State-level JOLTS data (model-based)
 - Move up monthly release date for national JOLTS data
 - \$7.5 million/year for increased sample for states, \$5 million/year for MSAs
 - Add JOLTS to federal-state programs? (additional cost)
 - Job vacancy surveys—Minnesota (reduced sample due to cost; about \$150k/year), Oregon, Florida (about \$2 million for single iteration)
- NLx/CareerOneStop
 - Five states using NLx Research Hub—KS, MI, NC, NV, UT
 - Looking to develop LMI use cases for NLx data, training materials, and visualizations
 - Asks
 - Support NLx partnership broadly—support public-private labor exchange, ensure regulations don't inhibit state participation in partnership
 - Promote researchers' use of the NLx Research Hub
 - Provide sustained funding for development of state and national data reports
 - Develop Python training materials
 - Develop data visualizations and standard queries for the public
- Worker Experience in Search for Work

- The U.S. Secretary of Labor utilizes department expertise to explore opportunities and identify needed investments to better understand the workers' experience in finding work, and barriers and trends in hiring, via available public WLMI sources and new public/private partnerships. The objective being to use this data to better facilitate meaningful and mutually beneficial connections between open jobs and available workers.

Other Business: Update on Potential Build Back Better Funding and Next Steps

MR. RIETZKE provided a brief update on the potential Build Back Better Funding. He shared that legislation had not yet passed and that the Department of Labor is continuing to monitor the activity in the Senate regarding the bill.

Closing and Next Steps

MR. RIETZKE thanked the Council members for their attention and contributions throughout the meeting. He shared that the fourth and final meeting in this series will take place on Thursday, February 3, 2022. The objective of the meeting will be to prioritize recommendations for further development and determine the updated subcommittee structure and the next steps.

The meeting was adjourned.