



LMI DIRECTORS' TOWN HALL MEETING

Tuesday, May 19, 2015

Indianapolis, Indiana

Summary Report



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Summary of Meeting Proceedings

Welcome and Introduction

The event was opened with comments by Phil Baker (LMI Administrator, Nebraska Department of Labor; WIC State Co-Chair) and Ron Kelly (LMI Institute). Kelly reviewed the goals, objectives, and agenda of the Town Hall Meeting. The WIC contracted with the LMI Institute to coordinate the agenda and provide a summary of the LMI Town Hall meeting.

Session 1: Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA) Transition

Presenter

Kimberly Vitelli, Division Chief, Office of Workforce Investment, Employment and Training Administration (ETA), U.S. Department of Labor (DOL)

Presentation Summary

Vitelli, whose office manages online career tools for job seekers and grants to state labor market information (LMI) agencies, discussed the WIOA Notice of Proposed Rule Making and ETA's expectations for state LMI agencies in the implementation of WIOA. Her discussion focused on details of how to comment on the proposed rules, and the law's impact on the national LMI infrastructure. Vitelli also answered LMI Directors' questions on a range of other issues.

Discussion Highlights

Notices of Proposed Rulemaking

WIOA legislation becomes effective on July 1, 2015, and states must follow the statutes at that point. Five notices of proposed rulemaking have been posted: One from DOL, three from the Department of Education (DOE), and one joint DOL-DOE rule. A 60-day public comment period will expire June 15, 2015. Proposed rules that refer to LMI specifically include:

DOL Rule: Routing Information Number (RIN): 1205-AB73

- Requires that states' implementation plans be based on workforce and labor market information (WLM), articulating in-demand occupations and industries. Four-year plans will be modified every two years based on changes in the labor market.

DOL-DOE Rule: RIN: 1205-AB74

- Unified and combined state plans, performance accountability, and one-stop system joint provisions should be informed by LMI.
- Local workforce boards will use LMI for local and regional plans and will include information on industries, occupations, skills, skills gaps, and education.
- LMI will also be used to define workforce areas.
- One-stop centers will be required to provide LMI as one of their career services.

The proposed rulemaking contains the following statutory requirements:

- Strategic State Plans
- Local and Regional Plans
- In-demand Industries
- Career Services

There are multiple national programs, and many online applications, that require LMI. Even where not spelled out in the legislation, LMI will act as the foundation for many WIOA activities, including:

- Business Services
- Career Pathways
- Sector Strategies
- Training Decisions
- Economic Development

LMI Directors were encouraged to submit comments identifying elements of the rulemaking they like and dislike, as well as any suggested language. Comments on each law must be submitted separately. Once published, the rules will be considered final. ETA will provide guidance to state LMI agencies throughout the first year of WIOA implementation.

Impact of WIOA on LMI Infrastructure

Workforce Information Advisory Council (WIAC)

The WIAC is an advisory council established in WIOA. The WIAC will provide recommendations to the Secretary of Labor on the workforce information system and the BLS and ETA two-year Workforce Information Plans. DOL will draft a charter explaining the WIAC's role more specifically, how often it will meet (at least twice a year), and a description of the membership (14 members). The WIAC will have a Designated Federal Official from DOL. DOL will file the draft charter with Congress in early July.

WIAC Member Nominations:

DOL is expected to release a Federal Register Notice (FRN) to solicit nominations from the public later this summer. The nominations period for advisory councils is generally about 60 days. LMI Directors may only submit nominations through the FRN system.

To ensure geographic diversity, one state cannot be represented in any more than one of the 14 different membership categories at a time. The Secretary of Labor will make the ultimate decision about who will serve on the advisory council. Members will serve three-year terms, and terms will likely be staggered.

Unlike the WIC, the WIAC is a formal advisory council established by law; therefore, it is subject to rules under the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA). The WIAC must provide advanced public notice of advisory meetings, and the meetings will likely be broadcast live or open via webcast. All WIAC meeting proceedings and recommendations become part of the public record. The Secretary is responsible for responding to the WIAC's recommendations. The first meeting of the WIAC will likely take place in early 2016. The Designated Federal Official from DOL will chair the first meeting.

BLS LMI Oversight Council (BLOC)

Additionally, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) is establishing a new BLS LMI Oversight Council (BLOC). Because the BLOC is not considered a formal advisory council (subject to FACA rules), it will be able to operate more like the WIC. The BLS will write the BLOC charter.

ETA does not intend to dramatically change other pieces of the LMI Infrastructure. It will continue to support the following:

- Analyst Resource Center
- Projections Managing Partnership
- Local Employment and Wage Information System (LEWIS)
- Cooperative agreements with the National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA)—with the National Association of Workforce Boards (NAWB) and the National Governors Association (NGA) as subcontractors—to provide technical assistance for communications around WIOA

ETA expectations of state LMI agencies in WIOA implementation

ETA published a “Vision for the Workforce System and Initial Implementation for WIOA” statement (TEGL 19-14). It explains that state, regional, and local plans must be unified and data-driven. ETA expects LMI agencies to proactively engage with their workforce, vocational rehabilitation, and adult education partners to ensure that these plans are based on reliable, timely labor market analysis. State plans must include information on:

- In-demand industry sectors and occupations
- Labor market trends
- Education and skill levels in states

ETA also expects LMI agencies to produce data that is more digestible. ETA expects LMI to be:

- Presented in a way that policymakers and job seekers can digest
- Housed where people can find it
- Easily accessible for people with disabilities

Online LMI needs to be delivered easily. Improved online tools that can be introduced during one-stop center visits will give job seekers more independence.

Other Issues

WIOA Definitions

LMI Directors asked for clarification on ETA’s definitions of “skills gap analysis” and “in-demand occupations.” ETA is primarily concerned with understanding the context of career pathways, including:

- The expressed and observed needs of employers
- The knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) employers look for when hiring for a given position
- The KSAs of local populations

This information helps ETA understand what types of training and education programs are needed, and to identify tension between employee and employer needs (i.e. employee is well-educated but working for a low wage). State strategic plans should create a balance between the needs of both groups.

Skills data challenges and real-time LMI

LMI agencies and workforce investment boards (WIBs) around the country are investing in real-time LMI to obtain information on skills that other sources of traditional LMI cannot provide. ETA is providing technical assistance on real-time LMI to some states as well. Many LMI Directors are concerned that some WIBs are paying for proprietary real-time LMI services without first considering what is publicly available through their state LMI agency, and without fully understanding the strengths and limitations of real-time LMI. LMI Directors want to know how ETA views and communicates with WIBs about real-time LMI.

Vitelli feels that it is challenging to expect all employers to adopt a standard skills taxonomy, making it very difficult to collect reliable skills data. ETA believes that O*NET data, in combination with real-time LMI, have the potential to provide specific information on the skills that industries and job seekers need. ETA acknowledges that both of these resources have significant limitations. ETA tries to be an honest broker, explaining what real-time and other data sources can and cannot infer about skills in demand.

In addition to O*NET and real-time LMI, ETA sees the Working Group on Expanded Measures of Enrollment and Attainment (GEMEnA) as another possible source of skills-related data (see www.nces.ed.gov/surveys/gemena/). GEMEnA is working to develop and validate national measures of participation in and credentialing of education and training for work.

FY 2016 Workforce Information Grant (WIG) allocations

States are being funded at the same level as in FY 2015. LMI Directors pointed out that this flat funding is coupled with ETA increasing demand for LMI through WIOA. Vitelli considers flat funding in the current budget environment a victory.

Collaboration with states to identify technical assistance needs

LMI Directors asked how they could work with DOL in identifying areas where technical assistance is needed at the state and sub-state levels. ETA will be reaching out to states to collect information on their training and technical assistance needs in the near future.

LMI contacts at ETA

- ETA is in the process of hiring a new Unit Chief who will be the primary contact for LMI issues. Until the position is filled, questions can be directed to Vitelli.
- Questions about the Projections Managing Partnership and the Analyst Resource Center should be directed to Sam Wright.
- O*NET questions should be directed to Pam Frugoli; questions about O*NET Competency Models should be directed to Lauren Fairley.
- There is a federal project officer (FPO) in each ETA regional office that serves as the LMI lead.
- The ETA LMI team will also add two new staff positions in the next six months.

Session 2: State LMI Shop Strategies for WIOA Implementation

Presenters

Lori Collins, Director, Kentucky Office of Employment & Training, Division of Workforce & Employment Services

Allison Leeuw, Director, Research & Analysis, Indiana Department of Workforce Development

Spencer Wong, Chief, Labor Market Information Division, California Employment Development Department

Presentation Summary

In this portion of the meeting, LMI Directors from Kentucky, Indiana, and California shared examples of how their LMI agencies are supporting WIOA implementation.

Discussion Highlights

Kentucky

Collins explained that Kentucky's LMI agency was moved into the Division of Workforce & Employment Services a year and a half ago. The agency has been working with customer-facing workforce staff for a year to ensure that they have easy access to and a clear understanding of LMI and its relevance to their customers. The LMI agency collaborates with workforce partners on a variety of projects related to WIOA. Ongoing activities include:

- Participating in cross-agency business service teams that include workforce development, LMI, and community college representatives.
- Developing LMI modules for Kentucky's Workforce Academy—the state's workforce staff development system. The agency is preparing two LMI training modules that will help local workforce areas determine what their sectors of focus should be.
- Helping build Kentucky's Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS). The agency has obtained data on completions and outcomes for every student in the school system (not just on WIOA-funded students). This information is being used to set benchmarks to determine whether schools can continue receiving WIOA-funded students.

Indiana

Leeuw described how Indiana is developing online, interactive tools to support the workforce system. Some of their WIOA initiatives include:

- Working with WIBs to create customized, regional reports about occupational clusters and their educational requirements. The team uses projections data to help WIBs throughout the state understand the most in-demand occupations.
- Participating in WIOA working groups created by the state. In Indiana, the LMI agency is responsible for federal reporting on WIOA, so the agency strives to be present at all working group meetings.
- Partnering with the Indiana Business Research Center at Indiana University to develop a website that combines state LMI with Census data. The site allows different LMI customer groups to easily answer common questions. Key features of the website include:
 - Region Builder – Allows users to select different geographies to build a region and obtain information on occupations in demand, industry clusters, location quotients, commuting patterns, and demographic details.

- Poverty Rate Look-up tool (based on Census Tract data) - Allows case managers to easily determine if a client is eligible to participate in certain youth programs, based on where they reside.
- Census Tract Interactive Map – Allows users to visualize demographic information in maps.
- Virtual Career Counselor – demonstrates the necessary education and experience that a job applicant will need to move to the next level of his or her career.

(Eventually, the site will incorporate Harvard’s Cluster Mapping tool and the Brookings Institution’s Advanced Industry Clusters tool.)

Leeuw also mentioned Indiana’s efforts to address the lack of skills data. The state has already linked higher education and workforce records to see where students end up in terms of industry and wages. To track students’ occupational outcomes, the LMI agency is using its Workforce Data Quality Initiative (WDQI) grant to assign Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) codes to wage records from unemployment insurance (UI), government codes, and public licensing associations. Presently, the agency is trying to develop a model that can predictably assign SOC codes to wage records.

California

Wong explained that California initiated the WIOA transition process a year and a half before the legislation passed. It started by preparing an industry and occupational cluster analysis for the state workforce board.

The LMI agency has identified nine new regions and 19 sub-regions for workforce analysis. To avoid geopolitical organizations, the regions’ boundaries were based on commuting patterns and industry concentrations. The LMI agency has encountered some pushback from regional WIBs because the boundaries do not line up exactly with the WIB areas. The LMI agency plans to engage in conferences and WIB meetings to show how the data from the new regions can effectively meet WIBs’ needs.

Moving forward, the LMI agency plans to focus on developing products for the 19 sub-regions. It will continue to focus on middle skill jobs, including entry-level jobs with upwardly mobile career pathways. The agency also plans to bring a greater online focus to its workforce development efforts. They will use Tableau on the front end and Socrata on the back end as its data warehouse.

Other state approaches to WIOA implementation

Vermont – Mat Barewicz

Vermont only has one statewide WIB, and the LMI agency has a WIB liaison. They plan to focus on identifying where in-demand occupations are present, even if they are not high-wage or high-growth occupations.

Wyoming – Tom Gallagher

Wyoming is working to determine if students are getting jobs in occupations that are projected to grow. The state is conducting a quarterly survey of students on skills and satisfaction with programs of study, using wage records as the universe. Survey responses are compared to community college records. Employers are also surveyed. They have achieved a 72 percent response rate.

Conclusion

LMI agencies should view WIOA as an opportunity to educate WIBs on how LMI can inform decisions about education, training, and career pathway planning. LMI agencies should also find ways to increase dialogue between state agencies about their WIOA implementation strategies.

Session 3: Real-time Gets Real, Really?

Presenters

Steve Hine, Director, BLS Cooperative Programs, Minnesota Department of Employment & Economic Development

Michael Ziesch, Manager, Labor Market Information Center, Job Service North Dakota

Bernie Moran, Administrator, Labor Market Information Center, South Dakota Department of Labor & Regulation

Coretta Pettway, Chief, Bureau of Labor Market Information, Ohio Department of Job and Family Services

Jason Palmer, Director, Labor Market Information & Strategic Initiatives, Michigan Department of Technology, Management, and Budget

Allison Leeuw, Director, Research & Analysis, Indiana Department of Workforce Development

Evelina Tainer Loescher, Division Manager, Economic Information & Analysis, Illinois Department of Employment Security

Presentation Summary

In this session, LMI directors from the BLS Chicago Region answered six common questions about real-time LMI based on their state's experience with various real-time LMI products.

Discussion Highlights

1. *Are occupational postings an accurate reflection of areas of higher/lower opportunity?* (Hine and Ziesch)

The Minnesota LMI agency compares job counts from Help Wanted Online (HWOL)—a real-time LMI service—to job vacancy survey estimates on an annual basis. These comparisons show that:

- Online job postings reflect more job vacancies than what appear to be available otherwise.
- There are disparities in job postings between urban and rural areas. This is partly due to the lower propensity of employers to post ads online for jobs in rural areas.
- Many labor unions are also less likely to post jobs online.
- Other job announcements are posted online just to collect resumes.

North Dakota's LMI agency has used online job postings from Geographic Solutions to conduct supply-demand analyses for the hydraulic fracking industry. They found that the local labor pool lacked the skills demanded and that most people interested in fracking jobs were coming from other states. North Dakota did find that Geographic Solutions' de-duplication process failed to eliminate 15-20 percent of duplicate job postings, so the agency is conducting its own effort to remove the remaining duplicates.

2. *Are "top employer" lists useful guides for job seekers?* (Moran)

Top employer lists are most useful to job seekers when they assign SOC codes to jobs. This allows job seekers to pursue additional information on the occupations, such as skills, education requirements, and

wages. Not all real-time vendors present top employer lists this way, so their value to job seekers depends on the vendor.

3. *Do job postings provide useful information on certificates, licenses, educational qualifications and other credentials?* (Pettway)

Ohio has access to HWOL. While job postings may indicate what certificates, licenses, and educational qualifications are required for specific jobs, the postings do not necessarily mean that the job is immediately available. One posting may represent more than one opening for a particular position. Alternatively, a single posting may represent multiple positions. Real-time LMI can be misleading because it often overstates openings for college graduates and understates openings for lower-skilled jobs.

4. *Do job postings provide actionable information on skill requirements of job opportunities?* (Palmer)

Michigan conducted a study using WANTED Analytics. The LMI agency first reviewed 25 job postings pulled from a random sample of 1,000 postings. They almost always found the skills mentioned in the job ad, and they almost always appeared to be correctly correlated with the position description.

Second, the agency conducted an analysis of 900 science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) job ads from HWOL. They found that 81 percent listed hard skills, 63 percent listed soft skills, and up to 19 percent listed neither hard nor soft skills.

Third, the agency conducted an analysis of 100 randomly selected ads from HWOL. They found that 71% of ads had some minimum level of skills information, and about half of these provided “usable skills” information.

The agency ultimately found that skills identified by real-time vendors only sometimes align with the O*NET standard skills taxonomy.

5. *Are job postings useful in the measurement of workforce alignment?* (Leeuw)

Indiana uses the data it collects to identify important industries and occupations; they combine this data with real-time LMI to provide additional information on current hiring trends. In their bi-monthly reports for each Economic Growth Region in Indiana, the LMI agency distinguishes between “Key Hiring Employers” and “Key Hiring Industries.” They also use the state and national New Hires Data Exchanges to show the difference between employers currently advertising for positions and top hiring employers. Indiana finds that basing strategies strictly off of real-time LMI does not fully capture employer needs.

6. *Are online postings useful for trend analysis?* (Loescher)

Illinois uses real-time LMI as an indicator to help explain monthly job reports. The LMI agency only uses real-time LMI to conduct month-to-month comparisons and uses HWOL to seasonally adjust occupational groups. The agency also found that job ads show a similar pattern to short-term projections, although the rates are not exactly the same.

Other state experience with real-time LMI

South Dakota – Bernie Moran

The state conducted a national survey of state LMI agencies to learn which, if any, real-time vendors are being used. Only 15 states responded to the survey. The most common services reported included HWOL, Geographic Solutions, and Burning Glass.

Illinois – Evelina Tainer Loescher

Illinois WIBs and community colleges purchased a statewide license to HWOL to explore how different groups might use real-time LMI.

Defining real-time LMI

Multiple LMI Directors pointed out that there is no consistent definition of real-time LMI. Establishing a standard definition will be important for ensuring that states can meet requirements for the provision of real-time LMI under WIOA. A few suggestions included:

- The distinction between “labor exchange” and “real-time LMI” tools needs to be very clear in the WIOA regulations. LMI Directors need to voice these concerns by responding to ETA Federal Register Notices and work with DOL ETA staff, NAWB, and local WIBs to aid in understanding what real-time LMI is.
- “Job postings analytics” may be a more accurate phrase than “real-time LMI.”

Alternatives to real-time LMI

- Enhanced wage records that require employers to report both wage and occupational data would allow LMI agencies to validate the accuracy of real-time LMI.

Session 4: Leadership Discussion

Tom Gallagher, Manager, Research and Planning, Wyoming Workforce Services

Graham Slater, Research Administrator, Oregon Employment Department

Phil Baker, Director, Labor Market Information, Nebraska Department of Labor

Presentation Summary

In this session, three LMI directors facilitated open discussion on three key issues impacting LMI agencies:

1. Staying on top of federal legislation and its impact on state LMI agencies (Gallagher)
2. Budgeting strategies – securing funding outside BLS (Slater)
3. Recruiting and building the capacity of LMI analysts (Baker)

Discussion Highlights

Staying on top of federal legislation and its impact on state LMI agencies

Gallagher walked LMI Directors through the President’s FY 2016 budget request and other legislation that has a direct impact on state LMI agencies. Gallagher summarized the current budget and policy environment as follows:

If the President's FY 2016 is enacted:

- BLS is consolidated into the Census Bureau.
- For all practical purposes, portions of State UI Tax and wage records are federalized.
 - State wage records and tax collection standards fall under DOL oversight.
 - State employment and training program evaluation is federalized.
 - State employment and training program policy development is federalized.
- Funding for state LMI from BLS and ETA (WIG) is flat.
- State LMI operations that can capitalize on WDQI funds should do well.

The policy strategy is:

- Bi-partisan (Ryan/Murray)
- Uses state participation in LEHD to leverage Congress

The President's FY 2016 Budget Request supports:

- Significant focus on improving access to administrative data for evaluation, accountability, performance management, and other research and analytical purposes.
- Allowing select Federal statistical and evaluation units to access UI employment and wage data through the National Directory of New Hires (NDNH) database.
- Permitting the use of NDNH data to improve the comprehensiveness and efficiency of the Census Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) program.
- Eliminating the ban established under the Workforce Innovation Act (WIA) on creating a national database of information on individuals receiving WIA job training services.
- Requiring states that receive new Federal funding for UI modernization to allow broader statistical use of their UI wage records than they already provide to LEHD.

The Department of Labor's FY 2016 request includes:

- \$31,940,000 for Workforce Information Grants (WIGs) for states.
- \$1,064,184,000 for Employment Services state programs. States must apply for these funds and are required to use LMI to guide customers.
- \$10,000,000 for the Census Bureau to develop a more comprehensive infrastructure for linking, sharing, and analyzing key databases.

Under WIOA, the Secretary of Labor is authorized to develop common data definitions and standardize reporting formats that are consistent across states, including wage records.

Budgeting strategies: Securing funding outside BLS - Slater

Slater shared a variety of strategies that the Oregon Employment Department (OED) has implemented to increase funding for LMI activities. While many state LMI agencies rely solely on BLS funding and their ETA WIG, only one fourth of OED's LMI budget comes from these sources. Another half of the LMI budget comes from a state Employment Department administrative fund. Some additional budgeting strategies include:

- Wagner-Peyser Section 7 monies: The LMI agency receives 7(a) funding. In addition, OED receives 80 percent of the state's 7(b) monies. 7(b) funds are disbursed to agencies at the governor's discretion to provide performance incentives, services for groups with special needs, and for the extra costs of exemplary models for delivering job services. The LMI agency receives 7(b) funding for exemplary products and services.

- Supplemental Employment Department Administrative Fund (SEDAF): Once OED has exhausted its Wagner-Peyser Section 7 monies, it may access (SEDAF) funding.
- Performance Reporting Information System (PRISM): The LMI agency receives an amount over \$200,000 per year to operate Oregon's PRISM.
- Cost share: Oregon's Department of Education and Department of Community Colleges and Workforce Development have contributed towards the costs of an annual careers magazine.

Oregon state law also allows OED to charge for certain products and services. OED's pricing strategy is as follows:

- Services that require less than four hours of work are provided free of charge.
- For more significant projects, OED charges \$60 per hour. OED first provides an estimate and then prepares either a contract or purchase order.
- OED conducts special surveys for WIBs for a fee (e.g. a \$60,000 skills survey).

Examples of other funding sources states can potentially tap into:

- State general fund
- WIA funds
- UI funds to support QCEW quality improvement

Slater recommended the following rules of engagement when requesting additional funding:

- Meet with people in-person to discuss the agency's needs.
- Ask for funding for specific projects. If a project is successful, the funder may be willing to provide funds for other activities.

Other state budgeting strategies

California – Spencer Wong

- American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funding: Rather than hiring new staff with ARRA funding, the California LMI agency used it to retain existing staff.
- Service fees: The agency now charges a fee for all ad-hoc survey requests. The fees are based on the staff level of the persons involved in the project. For projects that cost more than \$5,000, the agency signs a contract. For projects costing less than \$5,000, the agency will accept a check or purchase order.

Recruiting and building the capacity of LMI analysts – Baker

Baker shared various strategies Nebraska's LMI agency uses to recruit and develop qualified LMI analysts.

Some key recruitment and retention strategies include:

- Requiring candidates for economist positions to provide a brief writing sample and deliver a mock speech during the second interview round.
- Being mindful of the need to balance professional development and wage increase opportunities to retain the best staff.
- Establishing relationships with local universities to identify quality interns. Strong interns can perform work at lower cost. They can also introduce full-time staff to fresh ideas.

Some key staff development strategies include:

- Encouraging staff participation in webinars provided by different organizations.

- Sending staff to off-site trainings such as BLS trainings and courses offered by the LMI Institute.
- Bringing trainers on-site to deliver courses on different systems (e.g. data warehousing, ArcGIS, etc.).
- Providing internal job-shadowing opportunities.
- Requiring all LMI staff to write one article per year for the agency's monthly Work Force Trends newsletter.

Some key staff evaluation strategies:

- Regardless of an analyst's assigned program, they must be capable of taking data requests for any of the other programs.
- Agency staff must be timely in their responses to requests. The agency's IT system is able to track how long individual staff takes to respond.

Other state approaches to staff recruitment and retention

Oregon – Graham Slater

OED looks for individuals with strong external communication skills.

Washington – Cynthia Forland

The agency uses tests and/or writing exercises during recruitment efforts. A test might involve giving a job candidate an Excel spreadsheet with errors in it to see if he or she can identify and correct them.

Arizona – Paul Shannon

The LMI agency pays higher wages to more productive workers. Arizona uses a performance management system that allows the agency to incentivize workers with a five percent bonus for good performance each year.

California – Spencer Wong

The LMI agency gives job candidates math tests and asks questions about industry and/or occupational coding. Candidates are not expected to answer coding questions accurately; it is more about evaluating their thought process.

Minnesota – Steve Hine

- The LMI agency has a six-month probationary period for new hires.

Other state approaches to staff development and evaluation

Oregon – Graham Slater

BLS program staff are evaluated on whether or not they meet deliverables.

Wisconsin – Maura Taggart

The agency sets benchmarks for how long it should take to process requests for information.

Washington – Cynthia Forland

The agency sets benchmarks for meeting deliverables, as well as for other tasks, like writing articles. The agency also emphasizes formal training and professional development plans for staff.

Illinois – Evelina Tainer Loescher

LMI agency staff have collective bargaining rights in Illinois; therefore, the benchmarks the agency sets are looser than in some other states. However, the agency works closely with human resources to ensure that staff are appropriately rewarded for good performance and disciplined for poor performance.

Other leadership topics**Explaining short-term changes in labor market data to customers**

LMI Directors are routinely asked to explain month-over-month changes in Current Employment Statistics data. Many Directors are uncomfortable providing anecdotal explanations of these complex and sometimes unexplainable short-term shifts. Various LMI Directors described their approach.

Connecticut – Andrew Condon

The LMI agency provides anecdotal explanations of month-over-month changes only when other data sources support it. The agency does not provide in-depth comments if the changes are not statistically significant.

North Carolina – Jackie Keener

The LMI agency refers people to the national office when there is an element in the data that they cannot explain with confidence.

Oregon – Graham Slater

The LMI agency tries to be very open with the governor's office, media, and other inquirers when they are unable to explain a particular data outcome.

California – Spencer Wong

The LMI agency points out that month-over-month variability happens. Before offering a more specific explanation, the agency reviews the data over a three month period (at minimum). California takes the same approach with explaining variability in Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) data.

Enhancing UI wage records

Another approach to filling the skills data gap is enhancing UI wage records to include information on individual employees' occupation. LMI Directors discussed the benefits and challenges of implementing enhanced wage records.

Benefits:

- The occupational data captured in UI wage records would make it possible to effectively track how people transition through their work life. This information could provide insights into workforce alignment issues that other data sources are unable to provide.
- The increased burden of reporting occupational data on UI tax filings may decrease reporting burdens in other areas, such as responding to Occupational Employment Statistics surveys.

Challenges:

- Asking employers to add information on employees' occupations further burdens companies.
- Getting the timing right to push for enhanced UI wage records is difficult to determine.

Employment, wage, and education data confidentiality and sharing

Laws and regulations on UI data confidentiality place significant restrictions on states' ability to disclose employment and wage records. Other laws, including the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), protect the privacy of student education records. Penalties for violating these laws and regulations are substantial.

At the same time, access to and an ability to link these data for statistical analyses could play a critical role in the evaluation and performance of public education, workforce, and economic development programs. Aside from changing state laws, LMI Directors discussed ways they might work with federal agencies and programs to gain access to these highly valuable micro-data.

BLS:

- BLS could enrich the employment and wage data it collects and return it to the states for analysis.
- The states need to ask BLS if they would be willing to do this, and if so, how they would mask the identity of individual records.

Census LEHD:

- Data sharing agreements with LEHD could be written to allow LEHD to share back de-identified employment and wage records with states.
- A major challenge is that LEHD is still a voluntary program. While all states are participating at present, that could change at any point.

ETA Wage Record Interchange System II (WRIS II):

- ETA could expand the WRIS II system to allow states to share micro-data.
- A major challenge is that WRIS II is also a voluntary program, and it has very limited uses.
- Some states feel that they lose too much control of the data under WRIS II agreements.

DOE SLDS:

- Social Security Numbers could be replaced with a unique identifier and linked to wage records.

Conclusion and Follow-up Survey Results

Phil Baker delivered closing remarks. He thanked presenters and the audience for their active participation in the day's proceedings.

An online follow-up survey revealed high levels of satisfaction with the Town Hall. Twenty-one attendees participated in the survey. Respondents provided valuable feedback on specific elements of the meeting, which will be used to inform future event planning efforts. Ratings question responses are summarized in the table below:

Question	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
I feel more aware of ETA's expectations of state LMI shops in WIOA implementation.	4.76% 1	0.00% 0	28.57% 6	61.90% 13	4.76% 1	21
I have a clearer understanding of how the federal-state LMI infrastructure will operate under WIOA.	0.00% 0	9.52% 2	33.33% 7	57.14% 12	0.00% 0	21
The "LMI Shop Strategies for WIOA Implementation" session presented techniques that could be adapted to support WIOA activities in my state.	0.00% 0	4.76% 1	33.33% 7	57.14% 12	4.76% 1	21
The "Real-Time LMI" session answered many outstanding questions I had about real-time LMI's strengths and limitations.	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	28.57% 6	57.14% 12	14.29% 3	21
The insights, strategies, and practices covered in the "Leadership Discussion" session will help me in my day-to-day work.	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	23.81% 5	47.62% 10	28.57% 6	21
The "Town Hall" meeting format works well for meetings of this size and scope.	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	52.38% 11	47.62% 10	21
A LMI Directors' Town Hall meeting should be held annually.	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	47.62% 10	52.38% 11	21

Common observations and recommendations made by respondents to open ended questions are included:

- Respondents frequently cited two things as most valuable about the Town Hall:
 - The time allowed for open, honest exchange on all of the session topics
 - The leadership discussion session
- Common concerns with the federal-state LMI infrastructure included:
 - Funding levels
 - IT infrastructure development and maintenance needs
- Multiple respondents stressed the need for further discussion about state LMI agencies' role in WIOA implementation once formal guidance is published.
- Training and technical assistance needs included:
 - Effective data presentation and distribution strategies
 - How to turn data into communicable information while maintaining the data's integrity

Appendix A: LMI Directors' Town Hall Meeting Agenda

Time	Session
8:30	Introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Hall Goals/Objectives/Agenda
8:45	LMI Director Introductions (San Francisco, Kansas City, Dallas)
9:00	Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA) Transition <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WIOA's Impact on the LMI Infrastructure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ WIC to BLOC & Policy Councils ○ Workforce Information Advisory Council (WIAC) • Beyond the LMI Infrastructure: ETA's Expectations of LMI Shops under WIOA & the Potential Support Role of Key Partner Organizations
10:00	Break
10:30	LMI Director Introductions (Chicago, Atlanta, Philadelphia)
10:45	WIOA Transition Cont. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LMI Shop Strategies for WIOA Implementation • LMI Shop Concerns & Possible Solutions Discussion
Noon	Lunch (on your own)
1:00	LMI Director Introductions (New York, Boston)
1:10	Real-Time LMI Gets Real, Really? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Advantages & Shortcomings of Real-time LMI: A Chicago BLS Region Study • LMI Shop Concerns & Possible Solutions Discussion
2:30	Break
2:45	Leadership Discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staying On Top of Federal Legislation & Its Impact on Your Shop • Budgeting Strategies: Securing Funding Outside BLS • Strategies for Recruiting & Building the Capacity of LMI Analysts
4:45	Summary & Evaluation
5:00	Adjourn

Appendix B. LMI Directors' Town Hall Participant List

State	Attendee	Title	Agency/Office
AL	Michele Tatum	Assistant LMI Director	Alabama Department of Labor
AL	James Henry	LMI Director	Alabama Department of Labor
AR	Susan Price	BLS Programs Manager	Arkansas Department of Workforce Services
AZ	Paul Shannon	LMI Director	Arizona Department of Administration
CA	Spencer Wong	Chief	California Employment Development Department
CO	Paul Schacht	Operations Manager	Colorado Department of Labor and Employment
CT	Mike Polzella	BLS Program Supervisor	Connecticut Labor Department
CT	Andrew Condon	Director, Office of Research	Connecticut Labor Department
DC	Saikou A. Diallo	Associate Director	DC Department of Employment Services
FL	Adrienne Johnston	LMI Director	Florida Department of Economic Opportunity
GA	Mark Watson	Director	Georgia Department of Labor
GU	Gary Hiles	Chief Economist	Guam Department of Labor
HI	Phyllis Dayao	Research and Statistics Officer	Hawaii Department of Labor and Industrial Relations
IA	Ed Wallace	Deputy Director	Iowa Workforce Development
IA	Ryan Murphy	LMI Bureau Chief	Iowa Workforce Development
ID	Bob Uhlenkott	Chief Research Officer	Idaho Department of Labor
IL	Richard Reinhold	LAUS Manager; LAUS Policy Council State Co-Chair	Illinois Department of Employment Security
IL	Evelina Tainer Loescher	LMI Director	Illinois Department of Employment Security
IN	Allison Leeuw	Acting Director, Research and Analysis	Indiana Department of Workforce Development
IN	Steve Braun	Commissioner	Indiana Department of Workforce Development
IN	Olga Volokhova	Business and Workforce Studies Data Team Manager	Indiana Department of Workforce Development
IN	Charles Baer	BLS Program Manager	Indiana Department of Workforce Development
KS	Justin McFarland	LMI Services Director, Deputy General Counsel	Kansas Department of Labor

KY	Ashley Jones	OES/LAUS Section Supervisor	Kentucky Office of Employment and Training
KY	Lori Collins	Director, Workforce Intelligence Branch	Kentucky Office of Employment and Training
LA	Raj Jindal	Director, LMI and Information Technology	Louisiana Workforce Commission
MA	Rena Kottcamp	Research Director	Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance
MD	Carolyn J. Mitchell	Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary	Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation
ME	Chris Boudreau	Director	Maine Center for Workforce Research
MI	Jason Palmer	Director	Michigan Department of Technology and Budget, Bureau of Labor Market Information and Strategic Initiatives
MN	Steve Hine	Director, BLS Cooperative Programs	Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development
MO	Bill Niblack	LMI Director	Missouri Department of Economic Development
MS	Mary Willoughby	Chief, Labor Market Information	Mississippi Department of Employment Security
MT	Mike Peery	BLS Programs Manager	Montana Department of Labor
MT	Annette Miller	Interim Bureau Chief	Montana Department of Labor
NC	Jackie Keener	Acting LEAD Director	North Carolina Department of Commerce
NC	Michelle Beck	BLS Analyst	North Carolina Department of Commerce
ND	Michael Ziesch	Manager Labor Market Information Center	Job Service North Dakota
NE	Phil Baker	Labor Market Information Director	Nebraska Department of Labor
NJ	Chester S. Chinsky	Director	New Jersey Department of Labor
NM	Rachel Moskowitz	LMI Director	New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions
NV	Bill Anderson	Chief Economist	Nevada Department of Employment, Training and Rehabilitation
NY	Bo Wynnyk	Deputy Director, Division of Research and Statistics	New York State Department of Labor
OH	Coretta Pettway	Chief, Labor Market Information	Ohio Department of Job and Family Services

OK	Lynn Gray	LMI Director	Oklahoma Employment Security Commission
OR	Graham Slater	Research Administrator	Oregon Employment Department
PA	Randy Murphy	Acting Director	Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry
PR	Fernando Sulsona	Puerto Rico Bureau of Labor Statistics	Puerto Rico Department of Labor
RI	Donna Murray	LMI Director	Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training
SC	Brenda Lisbon	LMI Director	South Carolina Department of Employment and Workforce
SD	Bernie Moran	Administrator	South Dakota Department of Labor and Regulation
TN	Mattie S. Miller	LMI Director	Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development
TX	Doyle Fuchs	Director, Labor Market and Career Information	Texas Workforce Commission
UT	Carrie Mayne	LMI Director	Utah Department of Workforce Services
VA	Don Lillywhite	LMI Director	Virginia Employment Commission
VI	Gary Halyard	LMI Director	Virgin Islands Department of Labor
VT	Mat Barewicz	Economic and Labor Market Information Chief	Vermont Department of Labor
WA	Tim Forbord	CLFS Manager	Washington Employment Security Department
WA	Cynthia Forland	Director, Labor Market and Performance Analysis	Washington Employment Security Department
WI	Maura Taggart	LMI Section Chief	Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development
WV	Joseph Jarvis	Assistant Director	Workforce West Virginia
WV	Jeff Green	Director	Workforce West Virginia
WY	Tom Gallagher	Manager, Research and Planning	Wyoming Workforce Services
n/a	Gary Crossley	Executive Director	Workforce Information Council
n/a	Ron Kelly	Vice President, Technical Assistance and Training	LMI Institute
n/a	Haden Springer	Manager, Technical Assistance and Training	LMI Institute