**WorkforceGPS**

**Transcript of Webinar**

**WIOA State Plans and Labor Market Information (LMI) Best Practices**

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STEVE RIETZKE: (In progress) – national office too and then great in helping put this panel together. Heather's joining here in the room and John is on the line as well.

So before we get started, just a real quick Q&A for you all. You can tell us where do you work? Are you in a state LMI office? Are you in a state workforce agency, a local workforce entity or a state or local education agency or are you in another kind of organization? And if you're in another category, let us know what that is in the chat window.

All right. Your votes are coming in. It looks like we have a pretty good mix of folks from state workforce agencies, local workforce agencies, some good representation from state and local education agencies.

And of course, we've got some of you LMI folks joining us as well. Quite a few in the other category. Don't see those typed in, so I won't speculate what you are but thank you for joining us today, number one. I'll give you just another minute to put your vote in. All right. Looks like we're holding pretty steady there. We've got about a third of you from state workforce agencies and a good mix otherwise, so thanks again for everybody who's joining us today.

Let's move onto the objectives of today's webinar. So really, the overall objective here is we want to communicate some strong practices in using labor market information, particularly in the context of WIOA state plans. So as I covered in the introductions, we'll be hearing from folks in state LMI offices as well as some of our friends from the U.S. Department of Education.

And they're going to talk about their experiences, not just how LMI is incorporated into their plans, but what does the process look like for them to get to that point? How do they talk to each other between offices, between organizations, whether you're in the state LMI shop or the state workforce agency or one of the other partner agencies? How are they working together in order to lead to a state plan that is really rooted in the labor market information that you're seeing? Informed decision making, really using that information in the formulation of their strategies and their plans.

Another objective today, which we didn't put on the slide, but I'll say it out loud is that really we want to convey that if you haven't started working on the analysis and having the conversations that will lead up to a strong incorporation of labor market information in your state plan, start now.

This is the time to really get going on it, which is why, we're having this conversation, a bit several months ahead of when the actual plans are going to be due. So we know that planning at the state level has likely already begun for next spring's full year WIOA unified and confined state plan submission. I think some of the folks at the state level saw an e-mail just as recently as yesterday kind of kicking off the state planning process through giving some indication of what the timelines are going to look like.

So as I think all of you probably already know, the plan requires an analysis of both demand and supply in the workforce arena. So which jobs need workers? What's growing? What's shrinking? What does the labor market look like? What skills do workers need now and in the future to meet that demand and does your workforce have those now?

So also looking at which populations are possible labor pools. How are they represented in the labor force? So these are some of the types of things that we, we want you to be looking at as you're formulating state plans. You know, do different regions in your state have different economies and different types of workforce needs?

So again, just to reiterate, now is really the time to tap into your state LMI shops' expertise to access the data sources that they have available about your state's economy. Get some solid analysis that is going to inform the development of strategies that will make up your state plans. So we're really looking for you to emphasize the connection between what that LMI analysis says and how a state will make it actionable for a good plan.

So if I'm a reader of a plan, I don't really care about you reciting numbers. I don't want to just see some numbers on a page. What I really want to see is what are conclusions that you're drawing from that data analysis? How is that driving the decisions that you're making in the state to service the foundation of that state plan? That's what we're really looking for state planners to focus on and really want LMI, labor market information, to serve as the foundation for that kind of informed decision making.

And we're also, we really want to see all the program partners engage in a conversation about the economy with the LMI shop, not just the Title I team. Not just the types of numbers kind of exercise where you chuck a report over the wall and people pick up and run with it. But really having some substance in LMI conversations with all the programs at the table as a way to get better coordination on strategies across those programs.

So I'm going to shut up now and I'm going to turn it over to Jason Palmer in Michigan to talk a little bit about how they do LMI stuff in their state and how that leads into the state plan. Jason?

JASON PALMER: Well thanks, Steve. And I'm really delighted to be a part of the panel today. Thanks a lot for, the introduction. Look. When WIOA was passed in 2014, I think most state LMI shops did see it as a chance to join our workforce development friends in changing how we work.

We really looked at it as a chance to innovate and in our work as well. I think it was imperative that we did because there's been plenty talked about with how many times workforce, and labor market data is mentioned in WIOA, certainly more than, in WIA and JTPA and so on. So it really put LMI front and center and we really had to step up.

One thing that we did in Michigan to get sort of ahead of the game is first of all, we committed to reading the act just like many of you did. We said as sort of, as sort of the partners in this, we need to know this act as well as the people writing the plan and the people running, the programs.

So we did that and to get ahead of the demand, to get ahead of the work we had to do on the state plan, we put together what we call the annual planning in workforce analysis report. We prepared one of these for the state and for each of the ten regions. That's not unique, but what was unique about these 11 reports, ten for our sub-state regions and one for the state, is that among the 36 tables and, the 19 pages of analysis, every single table cited back to the act and each of the tables addressed a term or terms in the act.

So an example is, the state plans need to talk about individuals with, barriers. So we had a table for each of the, or as many of the groups defined in the act as we could, citing to the act so that the planners would know exactly why we're providing this data. In past versions, we had just thrown a bunch of data at the planners without any really length to the act, so we thought that was a good way to do it.

We also knew that it was important to provide the data and also provide the analysis in two pieces. The data we had to provide because a lot of planners wanted to do their own analysis. The analysis was important because a lot of planners wanted us to do the analysis for them. So we wanted to be sure that every bit of analysis was tied to a table and every table was tied back to the act.

Now, I could talk about that product more, but I think what I wanted to spend my time today doing is sort of giving advice to my peers, to the LMI shops and then a few thoughts to our partners in workforce development. So starting with the LMI folks on the phone, on the call, I think we need to be sure that we're not making the perfect, the enemy of the good, right? So when there is a term or terms that are defined in, the statute or in some administrative rule, we cannot, we must resist the urge to sort of get really rigid and say, well we don't have a column in our spreadsheet for, existing and emerging in-demand jobs so we can't do it.

You know, our workforce friends need to know I think that our styles, we're all trained economists, right, so we look for precision. We want, terms in an act to match the data that we're producing.

We need to know that that's not always going to be the case. So my advice is to spend time thinking about the term or terms that are in the act or that we're being asked to provide and match the best data that we can with that term in order to help our partners with their plans.

One example, of this is existing and emerging and in-demand jobs, which Fran will talk about in a little bit. It's important, though, that we don't turn away our workforce friends when they come to us for data because what we risk there is them going and finding less perfect data in the market. So it's really our chance to sit down with them, work with them and help them as best we can with the data that they need.

To the workforce people on the phone, I think I would encourage you to talk to your LMI shop as soon as you can and often. Again going back to, styles, the last thing that an LMI team likes I think is surprises. You know, knowing that they only have a couple days to produce a bunch of analysis is going to be very scary for them because we like time to think about things. We like time to deliberate.

We like time to put things together and it's in our nature, right? We like that precision. We like things to be perfect. We also need to be pushed to get things done, so you shouldn't feel bad about a timeline. It's just tougher for us to do the work when it's a surprise. That can be avoided if you invite us to, the table sooner than later and keep us close as you're working through the plan as those discussions are going on.

And as you're doing like Steve said, as you're telling the story and aligning your work to the data, we can really help by being there.

The same thing goes for, the local needs assessment from Perkins Five and I know that we would be really, my peers would like to be involved in that stuff as well. Now the, one of the last slides in this slide will actually be a link to all of the state LMI directors. So if you don't know in your state who that is, this'll be a great link for you to click on again for you to reach out to those people and really get to know them if you don't.

Another really important thing to recognize and this is for Steve and the team at U.S. DOL as much as it is for those of us on the call. We have to recognize that many LMI shops only receive the funding we get from U.S. DOL, whether it's from the BLS to do a lot of the production or from ETA to do the, dissemination work. So it's important if you're sitting in a workforce shop, if you expect a lot of magic from, your LMI team, I think it's just important to pause and recognize that, they may not be funded to do a lot of the magic that you want to see.

I see there's sort of two things to think about here. One is working with your LMI shop to look at what they have as, deliverables for their ETA grant and see how those, deliverables, those can be used best to support your state plan or how those might be tweaked to meet the needs of your state plan.

A second option is really to consider supporting your LMI shop through some of your stepped-up WIOA money or state money. This will help your LMI shop give you that level of service that you might need. So it is risky to look at what some states have done to support their state plans if you do not take into account the funding that those shops get.

With that, those are my pieces of advice. I will turn it over to Coretta to talk about some real-life examples of what they are doing in Ohio. But I think before Coretta, Steve, I'll pass it to you.

MR. RIETZKE: Great. Thank you, Jason. Those are great insights from the state of Michigan. Appreciate those remarks. And I'm going to turn it over to Coretta in just a second, but I wanted to just punctuate one thing that you said early on which is, not to let the perfect be the enemy of the good is how you said it.

I think that's a good point and it kind of reminds me how when WIOA first came out and for a couple years after, I think those of us in kind of the LMI realm would get the question a lot, like hey. WIOA uses this phrase in-demand like 31 times. You know, when is ETA going to define it more precisely? How come you didn't define it more precisely in the regulations? And I've said it to audiences of just LMI directors and I'll say it here. We're not planning to do that.

We don't have sort of one perfect, precise, national definition for in-demand that we want to make everyone use. The law gives some kind of broad guidelines for what that means, but ultimately, we're trying to maintain state and local flexibility and it's really up to the state and local areas to determine what that means for an occupation or an industry to be in demand. And I think, Fran in particular from Indiana is going to talk in more detail about how Indiana has figured that out.

But ultimately, and I think we actually say this in the preamble to the WIOA regulations that we want states and local areas to use a variety of accurate, reliable, timely labor market information. So ideally, you're using projections, labor market information, employer feedback, whatever other data points you might have to get the fullest possible picture of the labor market. So I just wanted to kind of quickly punctuate that point and I'm going to turn it over to Coretta to talk about the great things they're doing in Ohio.

CORETTA PETTWAY: Okay. Thank you, Steve, and thank you, Jason. I too welcome and appreciate the opportunity to talk about what we're doing in Ohio.

So as Steve indicated, states, he went into great detail about it, but the state plan must include a description of the labor market and economic conditions in the state and the workforce. So this in turn is used to identify a critical industry population and workforce trends of economic challenges facing the state. So the strategies and program decisions made through the state plan must also be connected to and aligned with the labor market trends and economic analysis that we provide.

So to this point and regarding the best practices that worked in Ohio and writing a successful state plan, there are three points that I will focus on. Now, the first is communication. Jason talked about that, but communication is key. Reach out and connect with the labor market folks, labor market information folks and get them involved.

The second one is the timeline. Steve also mentioned that one, but I will also talk about that. It is a continuous process and in writing the state plan, you should have one, a timeline that is agreeable for all that's agreeable and manageable for all. And then there's also one voice. In the end, the plan should be a cohesive document that you wanted to come together.

So for regarding communication for Ohio, LMI is not just used to meet the requirements of the state plan in responding to required elements of the plan. But rather, LMI is used to formulize workforce strategies on an ongoing basis. I'm not exactly sure how offices are structured in other states but communicating with others I believe is the starting point of best practices.

In Ohio, individuals who work in the labor market who work with labor market information at my bureau are located within the office of workforce development. That's the state agent for our WIOA and Wagner-Peyser. So this allows for a consistent collaboration during both the formal state planning process and that's part of the year-round development of workforce strategies.

Our office, OWD, uses LMI to make policy decisions, strategize new initiative, prepare grant submissions, provide local workforce development boards with LMI for their specific communities, assist with local development areas with their regional and local planning, address the needs of employers both locally and state-wide.

So our LMI staff also have a strong working relationship with the state board and the governor's Office of Workforce Transformation, whose office serves as staff to the state board. So initiative from that office includes identification of state in-demand occupations, conducting employer surveys as part of identification of in-demand occupations and developing an online workforce supply tool.

So by using LMI data in various aspects of WIOA implementation and strategy building, we are better prepared for the state planning process. So throughout this whole time, we've been communicating with each other and that has set the stage for having a better understanding of the labor market information data and what the data means for Ohio.

It also means identifying economic trends throughout Ohio, understanding Ohio's economic strengths and weaknesses and describing our economic challenges. So even if offices are structured differently, communication is key. If the LMI director hears things that are happening and knows contacts within those offices and things like that and knows that LMI information is needed, just reach out to them if they don't reach out to you.

So the other thing I want to talk about is the timeline. So another best practice in Ohio I believe is the timeline in our approach to it. Now as Steve indicated, he said that we should begin our planning processes now, but we didn't begin this early, but we did start planning about August or September when we developed our last state plan. So we began meeting in the fall of the year prior to when the plan was due.

And so, during those meetings, we reviewed the key components of the state, of the plan and discussed who would provide what information, so we developed an outline of the source data to use for the LMI portion of the plan. We also indicated that the source data was available for the regional and local plans.

So this was helpful so that everyone knew what we would be providing and the level of detail. The one thing that we did not do that Jason talked about was tie it back to the WIOA act. So we just tied it back to what was needed for the state plan and how this piece of information and this data source addressed that.

So in the end, we did provide the data just as Jason did. We included the charts and tables as well as the analysis and we did this early. And so, at that time there was drafts. Other people were working on other sections of the state plan and so all of the drafts were due about the same time to that we could then start tying the whole document together as a whole.

And so, the last thing I want to mention is one voice. So I don't know how it is structured in other states again, but I think it's important that there be one voice or one final reviewer or writer for the state plan. So we provided our tables and graphics and texts and analysis to go with the graphics. We provided that to our staff, and however, to the writers of the plan. I apologize.

However, it was not just dropped into the document, but it was preceded by language that put it in context with other activities in Ohio such as the process for identifying in-demand occupations for which LMI and an employer survey and a review committee are the foundation for that and for identifying industries that are the drivers of Ohio, which was also developed using LMI. That preceded the discussion piece when we started talking about the LMI data. But that set the stage for us going into greater detail and talking about the labor market trends within Ohio, talking about our workforce, talking about the barriers to employment, talking about our skills and our skills gap. So that kind of set the stage for that and then that was then followed by the activities going to Ohio that identify areas that we were, that we need help in.

So again, I think those three pieces are key is having a timeline that's agreeable for everyone, communicating throughout the whole process and then having one voice for in writing the document. Those are all that I have, so I'll turn it back over to Steve unless you have some questions for me.

MR. RIETZKE: Great. Thanks, Coretta. And folks on the line, if you do have questions, we're going to hold them to the end, but do type them into the chat. We're keeping tabs on anybody who has questions and we'll try to come back to those, as many of those as we can once the presenters have had a chance to talk.

Coretta, thank you again for your remarks. And I think it's great. Both you and Jason kind of hit on this point of, communicate early and often. And I think the activities you're talking about in both of your states really alludes to a process, a conversation that's ongoing. And it isn't just, hand me your data and we'll figure it out, but you're kind of having to back and forth and you're able to ask questions.

And you start early enough so that enough time to kind of wrap your head around the data, go back and ask questions, maybe have sort of a give and take or a back and forth exchange between the LMI shop and the other offices who are working on the plan. So I encourage you all to do that and I'm going to keep things moving to Fran Valentine from Indiana.

FRAN VALENTINE: Hello, everybody. Thanks for allowing me to participate today. I'm excited to be here. A shout out to some of the Indiana folks that I've seen kind of chiming in with your location. I'm excited to work with you, so feel free to check and make sure you have my contact information. I'm ready to go on the 2020 plan.

So I guess the thing that I'm hearing so far from our presenters is how much communication this really takes. There are so many different sources for labor market information and that's probably why we've had such a response to this topic as far as just where do you start.

So we know within that state plan we need to include an analysis of economic conditions and economic tells and strategies and labor market information and that information is, can be pretty broad. There's so many sources out there, so I wanted to kind of touch on a few of the sources that we have used in previous state plans.

You know, we rely heavily on our industry and occupation projections, both the short and the long term. Those are projections that tell us what jobs are growing or declining in the two-year and 10-year timeframe. We've looked to our economic analysis report that we produced as part of our workforce information grant deliverables and that can give us a look at a lot of great points of data that we can start with, including quarterly senses of employee wage data, current employment statistics data. Those are both industry data sources.

The (loud ?) data, which would be unemployment rate data. There's job posting data, UI claim data, census data. The list really goes on and on. So that's part of the reason why it's so important to bring your LMI staff to the table early and to keep in that close collaboration because we really can help kind of decode what are the best sources to use for this and how can we make this accessible to use. So really, you really should reach out.

Some other sources, we're looking to might be real-time labor market information data. So that could be ways to help us understand skills that are in demand with employers or certifications that are in demand. We've used in Indiana employer focus groups to help us with some of the skills vetting. We've looked to O\*Net. We've looked to SkillsEngine. There are, so many sources again. And then we're also looking for what are the ways that we can kind of funnel some of this information so that we can make kind of early, easy indicators for users of this data? And I'm going to go into a little bit of how we've done that in Indiana.

We've developed an in-demand ranking methodology and most states probably have some sort of a hot jobs list or ways that they can categorize these in-demands and this is just Indiana's message. We've looked to other states to help us develop this method, so this might look familiar to some of you, but we've also put a little bit of an Indiana spin on this as well. So what we're doing is for every occupation, there are 800 occupations in the state of Indiana at that six-digit standard occupation code level.

We've looked to multiple categories to see how that occupation performs in relation to all of the other occupations in Indiana. So the slide that I have up on the screen shows the different weights that we're using here. We're looking at total openings and this is coming from our employment projections, so how many jobs will there be total in the future.

And we look at how that unique occupation performs related to every occupation and provide a score for how it does. We do the same with growth opening, so how many new jobs are being created, the percent change, how fast are these jobs changing or being added, the current openings, so we're looking at what's the weight there, and also wage data.

We are using real time labor market information or job posting data as well when it's applicable to an occupation. So in some instances, there may not be a well-representation among the job posting data, so we don't penalize that occupation, but we do give a little bit of an extra category for those that are well-populated in the job posting data. And using these different inputs, we are able to come up with a composite score to give an idea of how this occupation performs, both in the short and the long term. And then from there, we average that score and come up with a final ranking.

And if you could go to the next slide, that would be great. And this ranking helps us in a lot of different ways related to WIOA. You know, as it was mentioned, in-demand comes up quite a bit and these are a few of the ways that we're currently using it. We're using this demand ranking at the occupation level within our eligible training provider list. It helps us determine funding related to eligible training providers. We use it for career technical education. It's been used in our adult education space as well.

And also, we have a next-level job which is an employer and also a job seeker kind of grant program that's administered at the state level, so outside of WIOA but it does find its way into other applications as well. We're using the demand ranking within our website, so there is an in-demand jobs page you can visit that gives all of this information that you can kind of filter and slice and dice in-demand jobs by region at the state level, by wage level and by education attainment level.

So we've really tried to make this very usable and accessible. It's found its way into our department of corrections work as well. So it really has translated into a lot of different areas and it's a way to again bundle some of the many sources for labor market information in a way that gives us a comprehensive look at how an occupation really does perform.

If you could go to the next slide please. I wanted to provide a deeper dive into this as well. This link will also be made available I think within the Q&A side as well. So you can look in at a deeper dive here to see how each occupation is scored and how it ranks against other occupations within this infographic. We have put some wage rules in place that allow us to kind of filter that demand.

So if an occupation scores very high in the demand category, but it's a very low wage, we do have some wage rules that will help us curve the demand ranking there as well. So we really try to be kind of giving a holistic look at what are the jobs that we, know are going to be growing that are in demand from a current employer standpoint as well as that future outlook and that do provide a wage that is a, more of a sustainable wage as well.

So I think that wraps it up, but I want to encourage everybody to please again reach out early and often to your labor market information partners. We are really eager to help dissect and make sure that you have all the information that you need to really build a strong state plan. And I'll hand it over to you, Steve.

MR. RIETZKE: Great. Thank you, Fran. I really appreciate your presentation. And I've seen the, I've seen you guys in Indiana talk about your methodology before and I just, as a part time data geek, I really appreciated the way you kind of boiled it down to different factors where you're able to translate your strategic priorities into this kind of equation for in demand, so that's really cool.

We've only got about 19 minutes left, so I'm going to turn it over to our friends at the Department of Education. Chris Pope is going to go first and we're trying to leave a few minutes at the end for questions. I know time is tight, but education folks, take it away.

CHRISTOPHER POPE: Hey. Thanks a lot, Steve. This is Chris Pope with the Rehabilitation Services Administration at the Department of Education. And before I start, I just wanted to thank our federal partners at the Department of Labor for as always looping in Title II, Title IV and Perkins into this webinar. So we appreciate your partnership as always.

So state VR agencies have long used LMI in their state plans and we're excited that they're going to continue using LMI as they build their next four-year plan. So I thought I'd just spend a couple of minutes talking about some places in the VR services portion of those state plans where LMI might be a good fit and highlight a couple things that, from RSA's perspective, we would be excited to see in terms of using LMI.

So a natural fit within the VR services portion is description L, which is all about the state VR program's goals and strategies, goals and priorities. I'm sorry. Description O is all about the state's strategies to implement those goals and priorities. So using LMI along with programmatic data from our information collection in VR since 9-11, you can make some data-driven decisions as you formulate, the VR agencies formulate their state goals and priorities.

So for example, state VR agencies might want to use LMI to inform program goals related to median earnings of people with disability served by the VR program. They may want to consider using industry sector LMI to inform their sector strategies, which in-demand occupations or those major associate clusters of the VR agency in partnership with the other programs will target.

I stole some questions from New York state's LMI office that I thought were good in VR agencies and other partners might want to borrow as they think about sector strategies.

And it kind of goes in line with what Fran was talking about in Indiana. Are there enough jobs to warrant special focus? Is industry employment growing or shrinking? Are real wages growing or shrinking? How is employment affected by business cycles, for example seasonal employment? Where are the jobs concentrated? And on the supply side, do we have enough candidates?

So using that RSA 9-11 data in combination with the LMI information, VR agencies might want to start thinking about the VR services they provide to eligible individuals, whether that's vocational training, college, etc. to help identify skill gaps related to those in-demand occupations that they've identified through LMI.

Finally, VR agencies may want to consider local area unemployment rates to drill down to specific communities or regions within the state. Above and beyond the VR services portion in the state plan, RSA and our partners would encourage VR counsellors to use LMI data in the development of individualized plans for employment. They can make this a routine part of their job when developing the employment goals of people or individuals with disabilities that they're serving to develop goals that are based on applicable and the applicable and current labor market rather than just the old style of picking a goal and then preparing them for something that may not be in the pipeline.

So those were just sort of my high-level thoughts about LMI and a couple opportunities within the VR services portion of the state plans where VR agencies may want to consider using it. I'm going to turn things over to my colleague, Marilyn in OCTAE for her insights.

MARILYN FOUNTAIN: Yes. Thank you. Good after – well I'll just say hello to everyone. I'm in the Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education with the Perkins Five legislation. And it's a new legislation which I wanted to share with you some of the significant changes and what that means with the use of the comprehensive local needs assessment and LMI.

It is very prominent and one of I would consider a cornerstone, specifically the states that in order to receive financial assistance, eligible recipients must conduct a comprehensive local needs assessment and that's where the requirement of LMI is very prominent there related to career and technical education.

And it must include results of the needs assessment in the local application that is submitted, and it must be done once every two years and updated. So the implications are very clear in the law. Not to say that it wasn't in Perkins Four, but it's now a requirement in order to be eligible to receive funding for Perkins funding.

The LMI information is mentioned several times in the new legislation in Perkins Five. It's referenced in different sections, the state plan, very apparent in the local application when the eligible recipients submit their application for approval of funding. And then of course, LMI information drives the uses of Perkins funds which we see is embedded in section 135 of the law.

This is a major shift from, as I indicated earlier, from Perkins Four, where the comprehensive needs assessment pretty much does drive the bus and that's where it is important for eligible recipients there to provide LMI information.

The requirements. There are several requirements in the law, but I just want to highlight two that directly relate to LMI and workforce boards. It requires that embedded in the local needs assessment, they have to provide description of how programs offered are aligned to state, regional or local in-demand industry sectors, occupations identified and state workforce development board or the local development board including career pathways where that's appropriate.

The CLNA which is the, or the needs assessment, must include an analysis of how CTE programs are meeting workforce needs and provides eligible recipients multiple ways to demonstrate local market demand and this is where LMI comes into play.

So a question might be what's the role at the state level? And we are asking or requiring our states to provide locals, their eligible recipients with direct access to state, regional and local market information.

The eligible agency should work with the relevant workforce and other economic agencies to access shared data as well as to coordinate that collaboration that we're looking for between the local workforce, economic boards and the local Perkins recipients to access and analyze the data.

And we find that this may require some new cross-agency agreements because now in Perkins Five, it's a new way of the way that we're doing things around LMI so it may require, our states to look at a cross-agency agreement to share data or to disaggregate data in alignment with other local economic regions or education service areas.

And then another thing, states must ensure that the data is understandable to their eligible recipients and anchor it in meaningful definitions. States, we're requiring them to look at review potentially or enhancing existing definitions and terms of high-skill, high-wage and in-demand. That's terms that we, are not new in Perkins, but they have been expanded upon in Perkins Five. States should also provide guidance and thresholds around the use of locally defined economic needs to ensure that our eligible recipients have the flexibility to support programs for our students.

And finally, eligible, we recognize eligible recipients will need assistance in analyzing and utilizing the data and that's where here at OCTAE or us at state level, we're there to assist. And we may walk across the hall to share in hearing those counterparts to provide us support so we can help our eligible recipients with that. I know our time is short and so I'm going to hand over to my colleague, Sharon Harrington.

SHARON HARRINGTON: Thank you, Marilyn. I appreciate that greatly. I'm Sharon Harrington and I am with the adult education portion or division with OCTAE. And I think that one of the things that I want to home in here is how adult education actually uses LMI. I think Fran made an excellent point that LMI is used in the Indiana adult education program and I just want to bring some attention to how adult education programs across the states do use this information.

LMI is extremely important to adult education. It helps our states reinforce the need for adult ed in the state and it also helps them concentrate their services in the areas where it's needed most. I want to talk a little bit about a few of the states and how they use their LMI.

Number one is Delaware and they use their LMI of course and the state level and they're starting to work on their adult education plan and of course their four-year plan with WIOA.

And they are looking at the current LMI data and they're discovering ways how they can work more seamlessly together to assist students in working toward those most in-demand jobs so that they can actually gain or sustain a wage that would help them move further into opportunities in economics.

Some of the local ways that LMI is used, particularly in Delaware, is that they actually introduce it to their students. It's a resource to them. Every ABE as we call Adult Basic Education student has to complete a career plan and this is where students will actually use the local market information to research average wages to ensure that what their pathway that they've chosen will give them is a sustainable wage.

And if it comes out that they look at that research and that data and it doesn't give them that sustainable wage that they're looking for, then they have to make a career decision whether to stay on that career pathway that they want or maybe to change to something else.

One of the things that is very prominent right now is one of the new components that the adult education program now has as mandated by WIOA is our Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program. And unfortunately, as with every federal program, we talk in acronyms.

And so, we'll use, we'll throw out the acronym IELCE, but what that basically means is that the adult education program that teaches English as a second language to students is also integrated with civics education where students learn about the roles and the responsibilities of becoming a citizen.

And one of the elements in this particular program is what we call Integrated Education and Training or IET. Again, another one of those acronyms. And it combines adult literacy with work preparation activities where students actually use LMI data to research, work and prepare for the world of work and we also use that in conjunction with occupational training.

And one of the things that local or labor market information is used for is to use, to develop these programs that match the growing demand for the jobs in the area. It's used by local programs when they're developing these integrated English learning programs and their integrated education and training programs so that they can make sure that the job that they're preparing individuals for are going to be in demand in the regions that they want to work in. We also, it's also highly encouraged that providers partner with the workforce agencies so that we can match our students with the right opportunities.

Georgia also uses labor market information to identify not only the best types of IEPs but also the best areas geographically. So what they want to do is they want to find out where the growing occupations are so that they can deliver the services that are needed in that particular region at the right time.

So it's really important to use labor market information to identify the entry level positions for those particular targeted areas and also to look at those types of occupations that are in high demand and also offer a living wage to our students.

One of the other things that is very important to us is to do use our labor market information. I'm sorry. It's to also look at industries and occupations that will offer further opportunities for our students. And what that means is getting them into a career pathway that's going to offer them stackable credentials so they can move higher in that particular occupation.

Some of the ways that states are looking at labor market information for the future is introducing it into their competitive requests for proposals. With adult education, all states must complete their adult education funds and one of the things that states are looking into now is to use that labor market information, prepare questions in their RSPs or RSAs for applicants to respond to and applicants would be required to use that labor market information in order to respond to the questions and also write more effective applications that would address their own community needs, particularly for that integrated English and literacy civics program and the integrated education and training program.

One of the things that is very interesting to a lot of states is in Kentucky, they have developed a model where they are requiring all of their programs to support college and career navigators.

It's going to be a new position and a lot of states are looking to Kentucky to see how they're going to operationalize this and they are very interested in duplicating this particular model so they can be using the labor market information in their own states and be using it with coaching and counseling their students.

One of the things that Kentucky says about this particular model is that while it's a focus on adult education, it's also something that's going to transcend adult education and affect the entire workforce of that particular state.

So I think that's all I have time for right now, so I'm going to throw this back to Steve and I appreciate being part of this particular webinar.

MR. RIETZKE: Well, thank you. Thank you to all of our friends at the Department of Education, Chris, Marilyn and Sharon. We really appreciate our partnership with you all and appreciate you joining in this conversation today. A lot of great insights from how LMI plays out in your work in education and, thank you all for joining us.

We've got just a couple minutes left before 3:00. We had a handful of questions. I know some of our presenters have had to pop off, but for anybody who's still here for a couple minutes, we can try to get to a couple of these questions.

So one question and I think this is directed at Ohio or Indiana. I think Coretta is interested in jumping in on this one. The question is how is Ohio presenting the state plan to the state workforce board for approval? Is there a detailed review, overview, or simply spoken on and left to individual board members to read? Do you want to take that one, Coretta?

MS. PETTWAY: Sure. Great question. So in Ohio, our workforce board meets quarterly, so what we do is a summary presentation to the board highlighting certain aspects of the plan at the board meeting prior to the due date. So that gives them time to ask question about the key items that we're highlighting for them, but they also have an opportunity to read the plan later on and then they do a vote by e-mail later on to approve the plan.

So this happens after the public comment period. So you know it has to go out for public comments, so this happens after the kind of public comment period. And so, and then when we send the vote out, we do give them the final plan and highlight any changes from the public comment period.

MR. RIETZKE: Got it. Thank you, Coretta. I think Fran and Jason have had to jump off but Coretta, I'm wondering, and it's okay if you don't have this answer off the top of your head because it might be a tough one. But someone asked and I think we've kind of been getting questions like this at the national level quite a bit. As things like machine learning and artificial intelligence are starting to be more and more prevalent in business, how are you addressing that?

How are you looking at that in terms of the impact that these kinds of disruptive technologies have, either on existing jobs or projections for future jobs? Is that something that's coming up in your conversations quite a bit or is it still a little bit too early to tell how some of those things are playing out?

MS. PETTWAY: At this point, I have to say that it might be a little too early for us to tell. We are starting to have those initial conversations, but I don't have anything concrete to say about it right now.

MR. RIETZKE: Got it. Okay. You know, there's a couple just I don't think these are questions, but sort of suggestions that came in from folks on the line. One is in Colorado, the person said, our state workforce board coordinates an annual talent pipeline report, which includes LMI, trend analysis and recommendations from state legislators. This person from Colorado would suggest this is a best practice because they always have current data available at their fingertips for the WIOA state plan or other purposes, so that's a good suggestion there.

Let's see. The other suggestion that came in, now I forget which number it was. Oh. There it is. Just a note that Michigan uses LMI in the development of VR employment goals and specifically using the career index plus, which is a free tool that was funded by RSA.

And it's an aggregator of data including local LMI, real time job openings, technical training resources and accommodations for disabled individuals by type of job. It's a really useful tool according to our colleague from Michigan who suggested this. And Jon, is it possible for you to paste that web link where folks can see it?

JON VEHLOW: Yeah. I put that in the Q&A chat right now, so it should have just popped up. It said careerindex.com/gst\_intro.dsm [ph].

MR. RIETZKE: Got it.

MR. VEHLOW: It's there in the box.

MR. RIETZKE: Well, you're a step ahead of me. Coretta, there's one question I wonder. Maybe this is an easier one to delve into. Someone said, you mentioned data that is accurate and timely, which tends to be a big challenge sometimes. I would add also how is the data actionable?

Otherwise, you have a plan without a strong method of implementing those strategies. And the question is how do you define accurate and timely in terms of LMI efforts? Do you have any comment about kind of how you keep those kinds of, the quality of the data like that in mind?

MS. PETTWAY: Well, the data that we in our collection shop that we do collect for the Bureau of Labor Statistics. We do, it has to go through a cleaning process. The data is timely in the sense that we are collecting it, we are cleaning it, we are processing it and then we put it back out as soon as we can. So if some people, they look at some parts of the data that it lags because it is a few months old once we put it out there.

But that does ensure the quality of the data because we have had the time to go through and clean the data as well. So it's, so putting it out any sooner would be challenging because again we are collecting the data from the employers and we are cleaning the data. We are processing it and putting it in a form where it's more digestible to our consumers. So that is how I would define accurate in timely in terms of our efforts.

And so, we pull data from various sources. We usually pull it from the BLS or the Census Bureau and they do have very good testing methods and good methodology in terms of how they handle the data. So again, that also relates to the accuracy and timeliness of the data as well.

MR. RIETZKE: Got it. Thank you. Someone else also wondered, do you have any thoughts on types of data that are, like what's the most useful type of information for your workforce partners or your education partners, whether it's in the WIOA state plan or just kind of throughout the year? Do you have particular types of data products that are more popular than others or more useful than others to those types of partners?

MS. PETTWAY: The data that we get asked about most frequently is the unemployment rates, and it could be unemployment rates for specific populations and also our projections data looking forward; what are going to be our most occupations with the most annual openings or something like that. That information has been used to create in most states the in-demand occupations, the occupations that are going to be in demand in the years to come.

And so, I would say that those are popular, but it really depends upon what your objective is as to which data source and which metric you're going to use for what you're trying to do. And in that regard, if you have an idea of what it is that you're trying to do or what you're trying to learn or find out about your workforce or your employers or your economy, have that conversation with your LMI shop because they will be able to point out the most, the data source and the element that is most relevant to your objective to what you're trying to do.

MR. RIETZKE: Got it. Good insights. Thank you. there's one other question and Jon, are we still holding the audience here? Are folks still on the line?

MR. VEHLOW: Yeah. There still are 267 people logged in right now.

MR. RIETZKE: All right. Here's one for the 267 of you and Heather Luds (sp) is in the room with me right now, my ETA colleague. I'm actually going to let you take a stab at this first. So one of the commenters said and this was kind of directed at Jason originally. Thank you for speaking on the bridge between LMI and workforce, but what's the roll of economic developers in this sphere?

HEATHER LUDS: Thanks, Steve. Well I think, as a stakeholder in a state's, success, economic success, economic developers should be at the planning table in some way. And that can be a number of sources of data that can be used in the analysis that the plan strategy is based on. It can be a reaction to the data that they have supplied to the planners and that helps analyze it and discuss the strategies.

So I think economic developers do have an important role. They definitely should be at the table in planning and engaged in a way that makes the most sense for them just in terms of if they have information that they think is applicable or to react to information or to valid data. To me, that's their role. I mean there's probably many other roles as well, but off the top of my head, that's two important ones.

MR. RIETZKE: Good. Well thank you. I'm not sure you signed up to answer questions, but you sat in on the webinar. I thought why not, right? So we've, Coretta if you're still with us and I just want to give out a shout out to Coretta because your colleagues had to jump off for other meetings and it seems like you got stuck with the brunt of the questions here.

But there's one other question that's directed at you. Someone's wondering what's the percentage of employers who respond to your surveys to arrive at the in-demand calculations? Do you have that number off the top of your head or sort of a sense of what your response rate is?

MS. PETTWAY: For that, what we're, the LMI data in terms of our projections is really the foundation for the in-demand occupations. And so, we do survey employers to ask them what their needs are going to be within one in five years, one, three and five years? So in the past, we did have a specific target set of employers that we would pose the survey to. Most recently, and we just launched the next round of our survey, is we've opened it up to all employers so we're a little bit in untested waters in terms of what the response rate will be.

So we are, I guess now that we've opened it up to all employers right now, we are going to be monitoring it and prompting responses when we see that there may not be many. But we're kind of like in untried waters right now, so we don't have a real target right now that I'd like to share. We have an idea of what we'd like to get, but we just want to see how we do with opening it up to all employers to respond to the survey.

MR. RIETZKE: Got it. Thank you. So I think that we've come to the end of the questions that we got. There was one specific one directed at Indiana. Unfortunately, Fran had to jump off for another meeting right at 3:00 and we didn't quite get to that one. But I believe she included contact information in the slides toward the end, so if you do want to follow up and ask that question, I think she's okay with that.

And actually, Jon, there's one other thing. Before Jason had to jump off, he mentioned the name of an author who has I think an interesting report on the impact of artificial intelligence and automation on work and occupations. I think you pronounce that Nielson (sp).

He didn't mention the name of the report, but if you google it and include artificial intelligence in your search, I think a couple things pop up. So I just wanted to pass the name of that author along because he mentioned it as a, some further reading that might be of interest if you're interested in the impact of automation and AI in the world of work.

So with that, as I mentioned, folks included their contact information on the last few slides here. We'll be posting a summary report of this webinar in a few days. Now I'm probably stealing Jon's line here, but I think with that I just want to say thank you again to all of our presenters and all the folks who helped coordinate this webinar.

Thank you to all of you who joined us and for those of you who stuck with us for an extra few minutes to answer a couple more questions. We appreciate your participation and thanks again, everybody. I'll turn it back to Jon for any final words.

MR. VEHLOW: Steve, you covered most of it, but yeah, I just want to thank everyone for joining us and sticking with us. If you notice there, we have a feedback window. If you could just take a few seconds right now, give us some feedback. There's also some polling questions and tips right there. Take a second to answer those questions.

Again, we have an additional topics window as well. If you want to hear something in a future webinar, feel free to let us know in that additional topics box. Just to remind you all, the recording as well as a transcript and an executive summary will be made available on WorkforceGPS in about two business days.

Also, if you'd like to connect yourself with your WorkforceGPS colleagues, please join the member directory. That link is located at the top or the bottom of the feedback window. So again, I want to thank everyone for sticking with us today and with that, have a wonderful day everybody.

(END)