**WorkforceGPS**

**Transcript of Webinar**

**State Wage Interchange System (SWIS)**

**Thursday, January 21, 2021**

*Transcript by*

*Noble Transcription Services*

*Menifee, CA*

LAURA CASERTANO: I want to welcome everyone to today's State Wage Interchange System webinar. I'm going to turn things over to one of your moderators today, Toquir Ahmed, the workforce analyst with Office of Policy Development and Research with the Employment and Training Administration, U.S. Department of Labor. Toquir, take it away.

TOQUIR AHMED: Great. Thank you, Laura. Hi, everyone. As Laura just mentioned, I'm Toquir Ahmed, a workforce analyst with the U.S. Department of Labor. I will be one of your two moderators for today's event. I'd like to welcome everyone to today's training. We hope you find it useful. And we will try to make this as interactive as possible. In doing so, we welcome any questions you may have during the presentation.

I'd also like to take a second and acknowledge that we were overbooked for the event, and that interest in this training exceeded the webinar room capacity. Obviously, this doesn't directly impact those of you that were able to join. But if you do have colleagues that were not able to join or register, please let them know we will be recording this session. And the link will be shared with the entire SWIS system. We also plan to offer a similar training in the near future. And with that, I will invite, Bruce – also a moderator – to introduce himself. Bruce?

BRUCE RANKIN: Super. Thanks, Toquir. My name is Bruce Rankin. I'm the technical assistance lead for the SWIS Administration team. And I, along with my colleagues, Christine Nowicki and Rachel Buchholz support SWIS operations for a couple channels. We do training programs like this. We offer targeted technical assistance. And we're the traffic cops that handle the SWIS help desk communications. So my role today is I'll help facilitate working with our two presenters. So I'll turn it back to you, Toquir, to introduce Lynda and Cynthia.

MR. AHMED: Thank you, Bruce. Moving on to today's speakers, we have Lynda Weber from the Maryland Department of Labor. And I'll let Lynda introduce herself. Lynda?

LYNDA WEBER: Thank you. Good afternoon. My name's Lynda Weber. I'm the statewide manager for data quality with the Maryland Department of Labor in the Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning. I'm responsible for the performance reporting for the Wagner-Peyser Title III, WIOA Title I, Trade Adjustment Assistance, and several of the dislocated worker grants. I actually do the submissions for Title I and Title III for the PACIA side to obtain the SWIS data.

MR. AHMED: Thank you, Lynda. And we also have Cynthia Binkley with Conduent. Cynthia, would you like to take a few seconds and introduce yourself.

CYNTHIA BINKLEY: Thank you. Hi. My name is Cynthia Binkley. I work on the UI Program for Conduent. And one of the applications that I support is SWIS. And I'll be able to talk to you about the operational package that is behind the SWIS. Thank you.

MR. AHMED: Thank you, Cynthia. Moving on to federal representatives, we have several listening in and available to address questions raised during the training. We have for Titles I and III, Greg Wilson. He is a supervisory workforce analyst at the U.S. Department of Labor. For Title II, we have Jay LeMaster. He's an education program supervisor with the U.S. Department of Education. And then Title IV, Andrea Hall; she is a vocational rehabilitation program specialist also at the U.S. Department of Education. And with that, I will turn it over to Bruce to go over today's training objectives. Bruce?

MR. RANKIN: Thanks, Toquir. The goal today is to dig into the nuts and bolts of interacting with the SWIS clearinghouse. Our two experts, Lynda from Maryland and Cynthia with the clearinghouse contractor Conduent, are going to walk you through step by step their process in highlighting best practices along the way. And we will try to emphasize those. As Toquir noted at the beginning, we hope to make this as interactive as this platform will permit. So if you have questions, please type those into the chat box. I'll be monitoring that. And we'll look for opportunities to ask Lynda and Cynthia to respond in line.

And we'll also do a little Q&A at the end. And then before we dive into the training, I just did want to point quickly to those file share items that Laura mentioned at the beginning. In addition to today's PowerPoint, we have the full acknowledgment form. And one of the things that we did put in the invitation today, if anyone is on today's training and they have not reviewed and acknowledged the data sharing agreement, we ask you to do that. You can use that form. And please send that to swis@cds2.com.

And then the second for those of you that participated in the town hall training, we have Bruce's best practices around data quality as it pertains to PACIA data transmission. So I think that's it on the front end. We're looking forward to hearing the details of both Lynda's and Cynthia's approaches. So I'm going to turn it over – and I'll just go ahead and forward the slide along here – to Lynda to talk about her process from start to finish. Lynda?

MS. WEBER: Thank you, Bruce. For Maryland for Title I and Title III side, our vendor, Geographic Solutions, supplies us with a wage request file each quarter. The file contains just SSNs. The SSNs are based on participant-level records from our case management system. The file from it required by the SWIS clearinghouse is always ASCII text file.

Even though a vendor creates our request file, we still do some checks to ensure no duplicate SSNs exist in the file. We also check for any invalid SSNs. In addition, we always ensure the size of the file is similar to a prior quarter upload. And we always take note of the record number being uploaded and a date a return file is required.

When we actually do a transmission to the clearinghouse, the first step is always logging into the clearinghouse portal, making or create a new request and the name of that request. For Maryland, we always file the same naming convention. We always say, like, Maryland request with the year and then the quarter. Request name by dates at a minimum is always seven working days. For Maryland, we always make our requests around the 4th following a quarter end, and always ask for return file around the 15th. We always select all quarters for wages. We always select all participating states to search for wages from.

And when uploading the file, we always ensure that the correct file is being uploaded. And then we submit that request to the clearinghouse. We always review the confirmation email coming from the clearinghouse. A confirmation email lets you know when the request was processed, when the request will be returned, number of SSNs matched, and where SSNs by states have been identified.

MS. BINKLEY: Thanks, Lynda.

MR. RANKIN: Cynthia, you beat me to the punch. I was just going to [inaudible] –

MS. BINKLEY: Sure. It's all right.

MR. RANKIN: – But, yes. I'll let you go ahead and start off. And, again, this is the wage request launch thing. Thank you.

MS. BINKLEY: You're welcome. So what I'm going to review today is the PACIA creates a SWIS wage record request, an operational flowchart, a PACIA email confirmation, and the wage records content. So the first slide here is the PACIA user will log in to create a SWIS wage record request. So the first item there is you're going to enter your description of the file. I just put in there first quarter 2021, but you put whatever you think is necessary.

The next item is select a need by date. And the default is two weeks, 14 days. However, you can override the need by date, but allow 3-5 business days allowing time for a state to respond. Now, Lynda, her previous slide, they do 7 days. And I support 7 days. I would say 7 days is a better turnaround time. Because if you use 3-5 business days, there's a possibility you're not going to get 100 percent from the states. Three to five business days is an emergency type thing, so I would certainly use Lynda's approach, and that is 7 days at the least. Most states use the default, which is two weeks.

The next selection there is consecutive quarters. You'll want to select all your quarters, like Lynda just said. They select all quarters. And that should cover you there. And it shows you how you just click on the first quarter and then the last quarter and they will all highlight. I would like to also at this time show you each one of those items have a help option. So make sure you read those if you need help. And, of course, you can always call us. The next – underneath the quarters – it's still showing Colorado. Colorado is participating. It's just Puerto Rico and Virgin Islands that are not. So Colorado is one of the FTP states down here.

So if you see that up there, it's Colorado started participating – I think it was January 11. The next item is the search option. And this is also a default option, which is all participating states. That's what Lynda said they do. They allow SWIS to send to all the states. But you can select – like, for example, if you send a SWIS request and two states didn't respond to you, you can override that by selecting on this radio dial, user-selected states. And then hit your control key and select the two states that did not respond to you and you can resubmit that request. Otherwise, you will always want to use all participating states.

The next item is uploading your ASCII text file. The text file should contain nine-digit numeric data on each line. That is only SSN. Don't put anything else in your file – no letters, no characters. If you do anything other than SSN per line, it will get rejected. Also, please ensure that the SSNs you submitted are valid.

According to the Social Security Administrative, SSNs may not have 0s in positions 4-9. The first three positions may not be all 0s or greater than 772. Also, SSNs of all 1s, 2s, and 3s, and so on, are invalid. By validating SSNs prior to submission, you decrease the transmission and processing time associated with invalid SSNs. At that time, the file can be uploaded. And all you have to do is hit, continue.

MR. RANKIN: So, Cynthia, before you jump forward, if you could just go back for a second, because I'm just sort of thinking about some of the TA, some of the questions we received through the SWIS administration team. And two quick thoughts, and then I'll also make a plug for Bruce Alinsky's best practices document that we have in the file share. But when folks submit their request, we know that some states make multiple requests and others make individual requests. You use the example where some states may not return. Can they just resubmit the entire request for all participating states? Or –

MS. BINKLEY: Yes. Absolutely. Yes. You can. Yes.

MR. RANKIN: OK. And the other question that we often receive – especially for states that are sort of right on the edge of making their performance goals – if I make multiple requests, am I likely to get more or better data, more complete data? And if you would just share with everybody how often the clearinghouse, if you will – I guess it's not the clearinghouse so much – but what they might expect to receive if they try to do multiple requests.

MS. BINKLEY: You know, some states I've noticed that when they submit more than one, the file name is different, meaning the enter a request description is different. So they may be submitting different requests for different reasons. I don't know. I've just noticed different name of files. OK? But the data is going to be the same. It's going to be the same because it matches against the quarters that were provided by the SUIA. So it would be the same no matter what.

The only reason to resubmit a request is if a state did not respond. That would be the only reason that you would want to submit another request. So some states will submit three requests. Some will submit one. Some will submit one request at the beginning of the quarter, and they'll submit another one at the end of the quarter. It just varies based on the state. But you should always get the same data no matter what, because that's what's in the DDBI for that quarter.

MR. RANKIN: So real quickly for everybody listening in, we have a couple questions that are coming through from our side. But if you have any questions for either Lynda or Cynthia as they're going through – there's a lot of improvisation here, and there probably are some things in the background – please enter those in the main chat box, and we'll try to get to those. Thanks, Laura. Before we jump forward, one question that did come in on our side, Cynthia, was the question about what are the typical questions you get when folks are at this point in the process, when people are trying to log on? And we know number one is, how do I reset my password?

But are there other questions that you often see. When you're on the quarterly reporting period when the traffic picks up, what are the states typically asking you and your help desk as far as this process is concerned?

MS. BINKLEY: Well, typically, if you can't remember your password, you have to call us. We cannot provide a password via email. You can email us at swis-wioa@conduent.com, and then we can call you. But we're not allowed to give a password through email. So it's got to be verbal. Plus, you have to answer a security question that you had set up prior. As far as any issues that we get, any calls, it's usually, I submitted my request but I didn't get an email. Or I submitted my request and – and usually if you submit a request and you don't get an email right away, you need to call us because something is wrong with your file. Because it will not process.

So you will not get an email either. So if you don't get an email, as soon as you submit your request and you do not get an email saying, we received your request, then something's wrong. So you need to call us immediately. Or you can email us also. And then we can troubleshoot what's going on. Another situation is, five states didn't respond to us. Well, some of those states, there could be reasons that the amount of SSNs we sent to them is too large. So they're having to increase space on their side to process the data.

But we typically are on the phone with them with the programmers in the states daily if that's the case. Or if they're not responding, we're calling them – you're not responding to our requests. But if there's a network issue that's out of our control, what we will do is we will notify that PACIA, your request went back, but the state didn't respond because they're having network issues. And sometimes these network issues could last a week, but it's out of our control. There are various reasons, but mostly it's that, I submitted a request and I didn't get anything back. Well, then we have to go look at the file and we can tell what you did pretty much by you put in characters that weren't valid.

MR. RANKIN: Super. So just for everybody's benefit, we often in the SWIS help desk will see notes where somebody will report incomplete or states who are not reporting. And that is something that we try to pay close attention to. And to the extent that a state cannot contribute, we'll notify the system about that. One more thing before we move to the next slide.

And that was one of the things that our team has seen and we recall in some conversations I think in coordinating with your team, Cynthia, is some of the new PACIAs that are coming in and the Title IV folks and more on more targeted or smaller requests, and if there was anything on that front with respect to the VR community and their request that might be different from, say, the larger workforce or education requests. Any unique topics or questions that have come up for that community?

MS. BINKLEY: I have not. I have not noticed that, Bruce. But if you guys have any questions, get ahold of Bruce's team. Get ahold of my team. I mean, we can help you. Don't wait until the last minute. We've had some situations like that where PACIAs have waited until the last minute to submit a request because they didn't understand something and it was too late. So please contact us as soon as you have an issue.

MR. RANKIN: Great. Cynthia, we are going to let you go forth. But I did get one more question. So I'll pass this along. But are there any file length or size limitations that folks should be aware of beyond the formatting? We've got the formatting down. But the length or scale of the requests – at what point does the clearinghouse say, we can't take anymore?

MS. BINKLEY: We typically don't have that problem. But if you try to submit a patch or request and you know you have a very, very, very large file, down here at the bottom-hand corner, there's a help option that shows you to zip. You need to zip that file. Once you zip it, then you can upload. But we've had a lot of those issues as well where they go to submit and it's not going. Well, it's because of the size of the file. But if you zip it, it'll go. There's no problem. It'll always go.

MR. RANKIN: Perfect. Super. OK. We're going to go ahead and let you go to the next slide.

MS. BINKLEY: OK. So this is the operations of SWIS. At the top left – I'm going to use my mouse to drive this, OK – top left is the PACIA and the state. They're logged into the SWIS website, swis.org. And then they submit the request. They upload their file. They submit the request. That will go to the clearinghouse. We will take that data and we will match it against the DDBI for SSNs match with the state. So whatever the states send us on a quarterly basis, it's in the DDBI. So I'll show you that in your email that you get back here shortly, probably on the next slide there.

So then we take those requests and the matched SSNs and we send it to the SUIA. And this is daily Monday through Friday only at 3:30 p.m. Eastern Time. That's when we distribute them. So the state takes them. They take the data and they match it against their own database. And responses with extracted wage data is returned back to the clearinghouse. That data is then, responses are verified. It's an automated process. Once it meets its need by date two weeks from now. Let's say today is two weeks. It goes back that day and the results are sent back to the PACIA requesting state.

Now, that is every Monday through Friday. The SWIS processing is Monday through Friday. It's not on a weekend because some states don't process on a weekend or some states won't respond. But we do that every Monday through Friday at 9:30 a.m. Eastern Time. So you'll get your request back. You'll get an email that your request is ready. I'm going to go to the next slide. This is the email confirmation you get. When you submit a request and we process it, we're matching it against the DDBI and we will send you this email.

This is an example. This (FFS ?) is the state, but we just put in FFS. Just say it's Alaska for example. And here's the request number. And I think Lynda said that she jotted down that number. This is the date it was processed on – November 11, 2020 at 10:12 a.m. This is the number of SSNs that were uploaded by – now, this is a small file – usually it's huge – this is just an example – they submitted 34 SSNs. Only 33 were matched against the DDBI. And it also shows your need by date. So November 25 is the day it will come back to the PACIA, the wage data.

So then this is the SSN input – 34, match 33, so distribution to Florida, Indiana, Texas, and West Virginia. So 7 went to Florida, 11 went to Indiana, 8 went to Texas, 8 went to West Virginia. So those states will then take that – and you may – even though we sent Florida 7, you may only get 6. You may get 7. Same with the other states. It all depends on what they're matching on their side, what wages they have on their side. So everything I said here I pretty much explained what this email will show you.

If you're not getting emails, one thing could be – if you're not getting emails – I should have mentioned that – is if your state changes your email address. We don't know that. You need to call us, because if you're email address is incorrect, you'll not get one email. So please let us know if your email address changes.

MR. RANKIN: So, Cynthia, I'm just going to chime in here real quickly. I don't want to steal Lynda's thunder, because she's going to give a little difficult perspective on that email confirmation and how that can be a valuable tool. But your last point is really well taken. And that is for everybody that's here, we don't know what changes have taken place if we don't hear from you.

And this is where the SWIS help desk and the same thing at Conduent comes in. If there are any changes with respect to the PACIA operators – those individuals who interface with the clearinghouse – please let us know right away so that we can update our records. And Cynthia and her team have the right records, so information like this – not to mention the fact that if somebody retires or moves on or is no longer filling those roles – that we can close those accounts out quickly.

MS. BINKLEY: Very good point. You definitely do not want to share your account. Do not share your account. You can change your information. You can change your email address. You can change your phone numbers. You're allowed to do that. But like Bruce said, for his records, he needs to know if something changed. But you're allowed to change that information if you want. But if you don't feel comfortable with that, we can do it immediately.

And this is what's in the response file once you receive it on the need by date. You'll have Social Security numbers, wages, employer name and address, the federal employer identification numbers, the North American industry classification system, quarter and year for reported wages, and the state postal code. Those are the items that will be in your file. But not all states send an NAICS code. Not all states do that. And it's out of our control. It's really based on the state.

MR. RANKIN: Cynthia, on that last point, I know we've had a couple questions from states about that. And it does vary. Basically, all the clearinghouse does is they transmit what they receive from the other states based on the match on the distributed database index. And so to the extent that folks do see inconsistencies there or have questions, please let us know. We are trying to take a closer look just so we can characterize what those variations might be. If it's typical, we'll let everybody know. But if there are inconsistencies in terms of the data elements within the response files, we'd love to know about it.

MS. BINKLEY: Yeah. And it's all yours, Bruce.

MR. RANKIN: Super. Well, actually, I'm going to turn to the expert here, Lynda. And we're going to highlight – Christine and I have been looking through some things here – just highlight some of those great best practices you have. But I'll turn it over to you now to talk about the download of the response file.

MS. WEBER: Thank you. You're going to receive an email that says that your response file, that your data file is ready to be downloaded. But the first thing we do, that email's going to identify the total number of SSNs matched, and by state the number of SSNs that they were able to match. We've reviewed that email with a fine tooth comb. We review the email summary by state. And if any state has more than zero SSNs matched but they returned the match as zero, it normally means that the state did not respond. We will immediately inform SWIS which states received an SSN match but returned zero, and let them know that we're going to submit a new request to just those states that did not respond to us.

Once we do that part, then we'll log into the clearinghouse to retrieve our data file. We do download our file as zipped to a secure limited access folder used just for the SWIS data. And for Maryland for Title I and Title III, only myself and one other employee have access to the SWIS return file. And it definitely helps with the security of this data.

MR. RANKIN: And, Lynda, if you don't mind, I'm just going to jump in and emphasize that. It's one of the things that we highlight in the confidentiality compliance reviews, or CCRs, is that the tighter you can limit access, control access to these individual wage records – the pure data that comes through SWIS – the better. And the fewer locations where those data records are backed up is another best practice. But I did want to just highlight one quick thing. And Christine was just highlighting this. And I think you touched on it at the beginning.

But as part of the request file – and this relates back to Bruce's best practices – maybe if you don't mind just going back for one second. When you create your request file for those things, just additional details on the scrubbing, the data quality, steps that you go through so that when you do submit and you get your response that you have the best quality match, if you will. And maybe you can even share a vignette about occasionally a nonconforming – or maybe not nonconforming, but an SSN that's in use suddenly returns responses from multiple states. So trying to flag those on the front end.

MS. WEBER: Yeah. Before we even submit a file, we always go through to make sure that we have no duplicates going in, that there are no invalid SSNs. And then when the file comes back to us, we still flag any duplicate entries, anything that's high wages coming in from another state. Because in the PIRL reporting extract, you cannot have over a certain amount of money being made. So we always look into those more closely.

MR. RANKIN: That's great. And we have a question, here, Lynda. And I think you probably cover it on your next slide. I'm just going to cheat and look ahead. But the question that came in was, once a response file is received, can we report it into our internal case management system? In this case, they're using the example of AOSOS. And I think you're going to cover that when you talk about – (inaudible) – here in a second. So we'll just wait until you get to that point when you're doing your calculations. How does that sound?

MS. WEBER: That sounds good. In Maryland, it's just myself and another individual from our Office of Information Technology that actually has access to the SWIS file. Again, in Maryland, we flag any duplicate entries. And then usually, high wages, we always look into them to see what's going on. We review in the SWIS file any individuals with wages coming back from more than one state.

Now, we do not supply our SWIS wages to our case management system. We just add it to our federal reporting extract, whether you're doing the PIRL or the SIR required. And once that quarterly extract is uploaded to WIPS – which is the U.S. DOL submission website – and the final reports are submitted, that SWIS wage file that we got is deleted. We do not maintain those SWIS files.

MR. RANKIN: And I'd love to emphasize that. It is the ultimate best practice that basically to restate, Lynda, you guys create your PIRL. You completed your reporting through WIPS. And that individual wage record, the raw data that's come back through SWIS is gone. You don't save a copy. You don't archive a copy. Your job is finished, correct?

MS. WEBER: Yes. It's gone. We delete it as soon as the file's been accepted by U.S. DOL; that SWIS file that we received from the clearinghouse has been deleted.

MR. RANKIN: Great. And the other thing in the context – and perhaps both of us can answer the question about adding into the case management system – but Maryland uses Geographic Solutions for your case management tool. Their only involvement in this is helping you with the request file, correct? They provide the participant SSNs that form your requests?

MS. WEBER: Yes. In Maryland. Yes.

MR. RANKIN: Right. And so what I can say what I know is that you're permitted to share those wage records with a contractor, whether it's AOSOS, Geographic Solutions. And there are some other vendors that are out there – AGLA and others. But the important thing – and I think we emphasize this a little bit later when you talk about reporting – is that if it goes into a case management system that only those folks involved with federal reporting are permitted to see those individual records; and that while local service providers – the front line staff who handle the individual cases – would love to see that, that is not a permitted use under the SWIS Agreement.

So that's the one thing I'd want to emphasize to the extent that Greg or Toquir, Jay, or Andrea would want to share something. I'll keep an eye on our internal chat box here. But that is an important restriction that those individual records, while you're welcome to put that up there, that it's not something that you can share with the local providers. And you just received a question here, Lynda. And I'll let you go ahead and answer it. And that is, if you delete the SWIS file, how do you complete your data validation of the wages?

MS. WEBER: We can still identify who is SWIS within the data, the PIRL file that we have for U.S. DOL. Because we can't locate it within the UI wage match or the other wage sources, we know then it was SWIS. And we always inform for data validation. When they comm that, we delete the SWIS file because we hold this very strict data, and that has to be held confidential. And currently, no one's told us that we actually have to save that file.

MR. RANKIN: Sandy, I hope that answers your question. And Christine's reminding me here that an important part for the question regarding case management systems access to and processing of wage data from SWIS, anyone who's involved with that case management system also needs to review, acknowledge, sign the NX2 form for the agreement indicating that they're aware of the unique nature of those shared wage records. So if somebody is planning to add that their system, that would be a prerequisite before those records could be uploaded to the system. Same for an aware case management tool, which we're familiar with in Title IV. Super. So back to you, Lynda, on your performance reporting.

MS. WEBER: Thank you. For Maryland, the SWIS, again, is not provided to our case management system. We do provide our case management system with the UI wages. We just do not provide them with the SWIS wages. Instead, that data is used as an import file. And it's added into our SIR file for U.S. DOL. SIR is just like a smaller form of the PIRL file. Once we do that upload into the extract, we will receive a link, though, to log that into WIPS. We have received duplicate errors that must be addressed, as well as logical errors that we have to go through.

And once we're through all the errors and we make corrections to our case management system as needed for those users with any errors, then once we can actually get the file through to U.S. DOL – but please note, we can prepare the aggregate data with wage record that we do receive from the SWIS clearinghouse for use in preparing those program performance reports and the individual records that the PIRL data has for U.S. DOL.

And for about archiving wage data and implementing retention and deletion process in Maryland, we do not keep or maintain the SWIS data WIB we obtain the wages from. We delete the SWIS file as soon as the SIR reporting extract and corresponding reports are successfully submitted and received by U.S. DOL. We do keep the PIRL SIR file for several years to support data validation, as well as now the eligible training provider extract that we are also submitting to U.S. DOL.

MR. RANKIN: And just real quickly, Lynda, on the eligible training provider, you're doing that as a separate request from your workforce program's reporting, correct?

MS. WEBER: We did that this past year. I think this year we might do it as all one request. We're still working on details. That is a newer report. And I think wages for the first time for program year 19 was the first time that we actually received the wages from SWIS. So this was the first year of doing performance reporting for eligible training provider.

MR. RANKIN: OK. Super. But you're following the same approach with those records as well?

MS. WEBER: Currently, yes.

MR. RANKIN: Yeah. Got it. Super. Just to sort of tag on those other points at the bottom and as I just emphasized a second ago, these same rules apply to any contractor systems. In Lynda's case, while Geographic Solutions supports Maryland's workforce programs, they don't actually process wage data from SWIS. So it doesn't apply to them. But if they do, if the contractors do hold that data, we ask that the same process that the state follows is applied to the contractor so that doesn't become sort of an additional location where maybe those wage records aren't subject to the same retention and deletion rules.

And, of course, a comment that I made a second ago about local service providers' front line staff are not permitted to use or access those records directly. And then the last point, Lynda, this, again, you guys, we've flagged you as the best practice here and the approach that you take to deleting the incoming results file once you've created your PIRL and your SIR file. For everyone else, this is highlighted in the SWIS data sharing agreement that it specifies a retention period of no longer than five years.

This was raised as a question – would a state guidelines retention documentation periods are longer than that and what ETLS, the employment training legal services, that sort of arbitrate or adjudicate questions around the data sharing agreement have asked is that if states wish to hold those records longer than five years if they provide a justification. And any of those questions can be passed through the SWIS help desk. Lynda, sorry to have interrupted. I don't know if you had anything else on that. But we do have another question here. And it might be one that you can answer as far as knowing the restrictions and limitations on the system.

But the question is this – since it cannot be imported into case management system if our counselors want to look at it, is there any way for them – I'm interpreting this as looking at those individual records. Just like they access UI wages, is it possible for them to see SWIS data? So I'm going to sort of paraphrase this to the question. The folks that posed this question, you can type in if I've got this wrong. But I think the question is, if they can see state wage UI records, can't they see SWIS?

And maybe, Lynda, if you could explain the restrictions that you have in Maryland that reflect those limitations, but I believe the answer is no. Everywhere I go the answer is no terms of locals can see state data, but they're not permitted to see SWIS. But maybe you can say that a little more clearly from the workforce perspective.

MS. WEBER: In Maryland, yes. Some locals can access the UI wages. And even we will supply our local areas with data extract files, like their portion of the PIRL SIR reporting. But the SWIS is always removed. They never actually see the SWIS data by individual level. But we will let them see aggregate figures. Like the entered employment rate, let's say it was 70 percent. We'll let them know that they have 70 over 100, but we will not tell them who those people are from SWIS data.

MR. RANKIN: And the guidance is that this access to SWIS was driven by providing the most accurate performance outcomes for the workforce system. But at the local level where they're very granularly case by case, that was not the intent of the agreement. And therefore, they're not allowed to see those. But as you pointed out, Lynda, you can provide the aggregate. Here's what we did across the state. Here's what we did in your region. They just don't know where those data come from.

MS. WEBER: Correct.

MR. RANKIN: Great. And just so the person who's posed the question knows that we get that question all the time. And we recognize the potential value at the local level. It's just not a permitted use. So that's why we ask, especially for folks that engage case management tools, contractor-operated case management tools, that they make sure that those restrictions are reflective, and that local service providers who have access don't see any wage records from SWIS that might be processed in the platform. That was the last part of yours, right, Lynda?

MS. WEBER: Correct.

MR. RANKIN: And we'll just jump ahead if my system will let me move it forward. We've tried to do these sort of in line. And I think we've answered the question there. Any other questions? I know it feels a little bit like being on the end of a fire hose here. Lynda and Cynthia have been doing this for a long time and they're very comfortable with the process. Any other questions about – fire away, Cynthia.

MS. BINKLEY: Yeah. This is not a question, but I do want to inform the PACIAs and so forth that Colorado did go live, but they're working through some program issues. So they haven't been able to respond to requests. But we're working with them. They're going through a modernization right now. We're on board with them every day telling them what requests are missing and letting them know. So if you do get a request back and it's zero there, they're still working their problem. And I don't know when it's going to be resolved, but they have been working this since the 11th. It's been about 10 days now.

MR. RANKIN: And so I'm going to ask Lynda to put that comment into context. Lynda, if either the District of Columbia, Virginia, Pennsylvania were suddenly to go offline, what would that mean to your federal reporting?

MS. WEBER: That would really affect us because we're sitting right next to them. And we do get a lot of wages that we do get from SWIS, especially for the areas sitting close, like Prince George's County, Montgomery County. For them one person makes or breaks performance sometimes. And when you get it from SWIS, it makes a big difference.

MR. RANKIN: Right. And so to put this in context and also kind of a Jeopardy question, when you think about Colorado having issues in terms of sharing their wage records – which is what Cynthia was just pointing out – they've been going through a process of modernizing their UI system – those adjoining states – which would be Kansas on one side and I know Idaho, Montana – the point is that when states go offline, it does become a big issue, especially for those adjoining states.

So for anybody that's on here that if you see when those response emails come back and the data are either missing or appear out of line, please let us know right away. And as you're hearing in real time, Cynthia and her team are dealing with the challenges there. And they'll be providing technical assistance and monitoring closely. And to the extent there's any information, we'll share that with the system so that everybody is aware of where things stand on the data availability. And I think, Cynthia, the only other state or entity that's not providing right now is Puerto Rico; is that right?

MS. BINKLEY: Yes. Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands – the two territories.

MR. RANKIN: Yeah. Right. So it's a small, detailed error, but we do try to keep track. And the status of all the states in terms of their participation in SWIS, as well as SUIAs – the state entities that provide the tax or UI wage date – that's also illustrated in a map that's on the performance page at doleta.gov. And if you ever have any questions, you can take a look at that. But probably the best thing is just to send us a quick update.

I'm getting the, we're in the final throes here. And I'm seeing that I blew it on my trivia question here. So I will not be on Jeopardy next week. The answer was, Wyoming, Nebraska, Kansas, and Oklahoma, New Mexico, and Utah to the west. So anyways, thank you. Real quickly, we have the SWIS resources here that you see on the page. Those resources are available. And we encourage you to take a look at the past town halls, the training and info webcast. And this training will also be recorded, and we'll get this out to everybody shortly.

Coming up on our agenda here for advisory group members that are on the call today, that's coming up on March 4. And then with respect to we know that this training, there was a lot of interest in it, but we're also interested in other topics of interest. So feel free any time to reach out to us at swis@dol.gov. If you're in the education adult Ed world, nrs@ed.gov; VR agencies, rsadata@ed.gov; our team, the SWIS Administration team is swis@cds2.com. And as Cynthia pointed out at the clearinghouse, swis-wioa.support@conduent.com.

So I think that's it. I'm looking at all the different boxes here. I think we've answered the questions. If there is nothing else, I think we're at thank you. And we really appreciate everybody's patience this morning in participating. And, again, fire off questions if anything pops up in the meantime, or if you have any topics you'd like us to address in a future training.

So with that, I'm going to turn it back to Laura, our WorkforceGPS facilitator. Thank you.

(END)