

ARC Meeting
Savannah, GA
March 13 – 15, 2018

Attending: Jackie Summerton, WI; Kevin Doyle, MI; Annette Miller, MT; Dana Placzek CT; Andy Condon, CT; Christopher Robison, NV; Steve Duthie, MT; Al Sylvestre, CT; Gary Sincick, OR; Bill McMahon, MN; Stacey Joos, UT/LEWIS; Steve Brock, UT/LEWIS; Rajani Edupalli, VA; Carol Agee, VA; Amanda Rohrer, MN/ARC; Steve Hine, MN; Tim Kestner, VA; Nicole Kennedy, NC; John Pearce, OR; and Barb Ledvina, IA/ARC.

Tuesday, March 13, 2018

Steve Hine welcomed everyone to Savannah. Introductions were made. It was noted that Annette Miller and Steve Brock will be retiring and that this would be their last meeting.

Hine updated the group on the budget, which seems to be in good shape.

Hine had drafted a Statement of Work for the ARC and sent it to the members. He asks that each subcommittee review. A review of the SOW should be done each year by ARC members.

Stacey Joos, Steve Brock provided an update of LEWIS with Paul Laforge joining by phone. Utah has the contract for development and maintenance of LEWIS, then subcontracts with the IT group. It was noted that Matthew Stedman has been hired to replace Skylar Spainhower, and will join the team as lead LEWIS developer in April.

With the turnover the LEWIS project has experienced, the group asked whether Tom Price of North Carolina could be re-engaged as a technical consultant. Price had previously been instrumental in the development of LEWIS. Steve Hine asked that the LEWIS team determine if Tom Price would be allowed to work on the project, and Steve Hine said he would arrange a new contract with NC if possible for Price's work.

LEWIS redevelopment remains a top priority. Preliminary work has been done in researching technical solutions. A web interface system with data hosted in a FedRAMP certified AWS cloud server seems to be the optimal solution. BLS approval to host OES confidential data the primary obstacle. Steve Brock will condense discussion and research into a proposal that Steve Hine can take to BLS for consideration. A question was raised about whether there is documentation about what LEWIS can do. The Education Committee will look into whether this information exists, or needs to be created.

Amanda Rohrer has been instrumental in reworking the ARC website so that it is more functional. The site now has four areas (I'm New, LMI Directors, DBAs, and Other) that can help direct visitors to the site to the information they may be interested in. In addition, key information is included on the front page rather than being hidden – TEGL, Information about the ARC, and information about the structure of the WID.

Prior to this meeting, Steve Hine has asked members to come up with ideas for future work that the ARC could do to help serve the workforce information community. During the meeting the following ideas were shared:

- Continue efforts to enable use of web services and APIs for data deliver and sharing. Gary Sincick mentioned the Open API Initiative (OAI) as a useful model or resource, with the

goal of establishing a common set of functions for access the WID, or a standard structure to consume Core Table and other WID data. Gary Sincick and John Pearce will write an initial proposal for consideration at our next meeting.

- That the ARC might facilitate communication between LMI program staff and DBA and IT staff by providing access to BLS program S-memos. This communication is often not made available to IT staff. Discussion was held on whether all S-memos should be provided or if they should be filtered to those that are relevant to IT staff. Steve Hine will check with BLS to see if there are any concerns about making these memos more “public”.
- Restart the “Sandbox” concept. Discussion on whether the ARC Forum or some other resource (BaseCamp?) could be used for this project. Hine and Andy Condon will look back on what proposed rules had already been drafted for this, and Rohrer will investigate possible plugin options that might best facilitate a user contribution type of site. As initial “seed” contributions, Steve Duthie offered his Tableau scripts, Andy Condon offered his secondary suppression scripts, and Gary Sincick his WID loader API.
- Data visualization was also discussed as another possible area that the ARC could provide support.

Discussion was held on the Core Tables, and whether to drop income and population. The Structure Committee will review.

Wednesday, March 14, 2018

Discussion was held on the Employer Database, and the upcoming contract renew process. Connecticut took over the contract process from Iowa the last time the contract was renewed. Because of the amount of time and the expense of the contract process, Connecticut does not want to continue this responsibility the next go around. The process is lengthy, and the vendor not selected has historically challenged the award decision – dragging out the time and expense of the process. Discussion had previously been held on whether the Feds would be willing to take this on. If there was an existing GSA contract with any of the vendors involved, the process could be much easier. Al Sylvestre will pursue the GSA option. It was noted that if the GSA option is not available, and no other state takes on the process, the Employer Database may cease to be available to the states through the ARC. Andy Condon suggested that the ARC use a survey to determine how states use the Employer Database. If states are not using the specialized fields that the current Employer Database provides, perhaps the ARC could look into a more generic, cheaper option.

The Policy, Structure, and Education committees met the remainder of the day.

Thursday, March 15, 2018

Committee Reports

Policy Committee

Steve Hine began the committee work by reviewing conversations we have had within the ARC and with Steve Reitzke and Don Houghton at ETA about the concerns regarding the Employer Database. With 2½ years before the end of the current master contract, we need to have another state willing to manage the master contract through RFP and administration, but ongoing costs and challenges (appeals by RFP respondents not selected) make that unlikely. Steve Hine asked that Al Sylvestre do some digging into federal government procurement policies on the chance we can identify a solution. Hine will continue to pursue this with ETA as well.

Steve Brock led discussion around the technical advantages and requirements of a cloud-based hosting of LEWIS, and the process for gaining FedRAMP certification. Appears that ARC's AWS account and AWS FedRamp credentials have us in a good position, but further investigation is warranted to make sure. Steve Brock agreed to pursue.

Steve Hine pointed out that in numerous conversations with BLS officials, the leadership in OEUS appear to recognize the advantages of a secure cloud-based solution for LEWIS, but they point out that the BLS Office of Technology will need to provide approvals. ARC needs to create a thorough and compelling proposal for BLS to consider, both in OEUS and in IT. Steve Brock again agreed to head this up with Paul Laforge.

Policy Committee then reviewed the new/current ARC website and compiled the following list of requests/suggestions for enhancements:

- Check that high-traffic pages are easy to find, e.g. are on the main pull-down menus.
- Add DOL seal and accreditation to site footer (see COS and ONet)
- Implement security certificate now that site has migrated
- Investigate auto-forwarding from old ARC/NCSC sites, implement if feasible
- Change "Other" to "Other Users"
- Increase font size on sparse pages like "Other"
- Add links to other high traffic pages on site to "Other"
- Add "About the ARC" to "I'm New"
- Clarify content of links on "I'm New", remove/spell out acronyms, add explanatory info, perhaps some limited info from "About the ARC" (Carol offered to write this)
- On "LMI Directors", move "What's the ARC" to the top of the link list
- Add explanatory content to links here as well
- Consider adding any content ARC-related from Annette's NASWA training material
- Are there any links back and forth we should integrate between C2ER, COS, NASWA, ONet, others?
- Add COS to list of partners
- Add link to license download on COS to "License" page
- Add description of main data available from partners with links to data downloads either on partner site or on ARC site
- Add a paragraph to "LMI Directors" that describes how the ARC supports LMI Directors (Chris offered to write)
- Same on "State DBAs" page – description of ARC services and description of links
- Download Center was difficult, so suggestions below may require more thought/input
- Create two pull-down selection box, one for state, one for data category, then develop page that describes data available under selected category, with download links to file server
- Investigate WordPress Download Manager plug-ins (See Bill's emails)
- The CES states download is one huge file, parse this out to 50 files
- LAUS states download link is broken (404)
- INDUSTRY states download page takes to non-core file server site
- Add video links to drop downs as appropriate (neglect as videos will be eliminated), and add W3 School link to NewDBA Page
- Add mention of LEWIS and add link to training docs
- Steve Brock will look into allowing public access to all LEWIS content but software downloads and forum
- Also develop LEWIS with an ARC "look and feel"

- Remove “Supported Activities” and “Guidance” from “About the ARC” pull down and add the two each components to the pull down instead

Review of site and Download Center specifically led to discussion which WID table should we populate in WID format and make available for state download. Criteria used to frame discussion were; are the data readily available from public sources?; are they easily converted to WID format?; and are they of value to the LMI community?

Some Core Tables may make sense to populate, although states generally populate their CES and LABFORCE tables prior to public release from the BLS site. Despite this, site traffic suggests some states are downloading these tables as they are released.

Other Core Tables would be fairly large if they include all states’ data; e.g. INDUSTRY, IOWAGE; and most states would/could include geographies that wouldn’t be available at BLS.

Policy Committee proposes that Structure Committee review the content and structure of CENLABOR, DEMOGRAPHICS and POPULATN to identify overlap, inconsistencies and ambiguity and propose a structure and content that provides valuable demographic info relevant to workforce issues that could be populated and provided on an ongoing basis.

Policy also proposes that Structure compare PROGCOMP and SUPPLY and propose any improvements.

Policy has recommended that Structure consider the list of Core Tables and make recommendations for any changes to the list. Structure proposes eliminating POPULATN and INCOME from the list, and Policy agreed.

Policy recommends that Structure consider the contents of INCOME and COMMUTE and propose a source(s) of data that removes ambiguity around which of many measures should be included, populated and distributed.

Policy Committee did not review Look-Up Tables and Crosswalks, but recommends a similar review to determine which (if any) should be populated and made available.

Education/Training Committee

Following the DBA training that was held in St. Paul in August of 2016, the Education/Training Committee had developed training modules that were placed on the ARC website. Annette Miller had created these training modules using specialized software. Issues with being able to update the videos became a concern. Annette Miller transferred all of the training modules to a PowerPoint slide show. The Education/Training Committee spent much of their time reviewing the slide show making it ready to be placed on the website.

In addition, the Education/Training Committee came up with topics and assignments for a spring newsletter. Barb Ledvina will coordinate and compile the newsletter.

Structure Committee

SOC vs OES-specific codes. See official OES(BLS) site for list of OES-specific codes. Committee decided to leave things as they are.

CPI areas- a redefinition is coming. It was suggested that new code types be added for the 2018 revision.

Laytitles: Use the O*NET structure and list; Duthie and Dana Placzek will prototype a table to make non-standard, possibly calling this onetlaytitles.

Income table references to incomtyp table includes incsource. Discussion of why this is so, with conclusion that we need to separate these 2 tables, not have one dependent on the other.

Progcomp vs supply: seems to be a distinction; leave as is. Note that GeoSol uses both.

Matrix industries and ownership: Oregon would like to know the ownership of the industries. Group decided to add ownership field effective with version 2.7.1.

Taxtype: description field needs to be extended, to 75. Implement via addendum.

The group decided to release version 2.7.1 at next ARC meeting in the fall of 2018.

The group decided to accept the Statement of Work that Steve Hine drafted as is.

Discussion was held on what constitutes a major, dot, and double-dot release. Group decided to use this as the criteria: Double-Dot for patches, bug fix, documentation; Dot for backward-compatible changes to structure; and Major for non-backward compatible changes.

The group decided that the next version will be a dot release.

Geogxzip table: Amanda Rohrer confirms that table source exists, and that the file is on the download structure, but not on non-standard page. Group questioned whether data is available by zip code.

Web services and the ARC: The group agree that standards for web services are a good idea, and that the ARC should develop them. John Pearce and Gary Sincick will create some APIs to demo for the next meeting. Bill McMahon (Career OneStop) is using APIs and web services.

Occ and ind crosswalks: Dana Placzek will work to deprecate all unnecessary xwalk tables, including industries.

Discussion was held about the possibility of creating a universal crosswalk. The decision was made that it probably wouldn't be a benefit to the states.

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Discussion was held on the re-write of LEWIS. Work will continue once the replacement for Spainhower starts in April. One issue LEWIS faces is that most states need an administrator to install software updates. If LEWIS becomes web-based, this issue could be resolved. The group suggested that the ARC logo be embedded into the LEWIS website.

Wrap-up

The group discussed meeting locations for the fall meeting. Steve Hine will check to see if we need to go back to the Washington, DC area to meet, or if another location will work. Possibly San Diego.