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| TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT NOTICE | NO. 36-16 |
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TO: AFFILIATE AMERICAN JOB CENTER DIRECTORS
 COMPREHENSIVE AMERICAN JOB CENTER DIRECTORS
 WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT (WIOA) 166
 INDIAN AND NATIVE AMERICAN GRANTEEES
 DEPARTMENT OF LABOR (DOL) EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING
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 WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD STATE EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS
 WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD LOCAL EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS

FROM: PORTIA WU 
 Assistant Secretary

SUBJECT: Release and Availability of Two Reports: *Using Workforce Data Quality Initiative (WDQI) Databases to Develop and Improve Consumer Report Card Systems (CRCS) and How States Manage Eligible Training Provider Lists: Findings from a State Survey*

1. **Purpose.** The Employment and Training Administration (ETA) announces the release and availability of two papers from a study of states' use of Workforce Data Quality Initiative (WDQI) Databases to inform Consumer Report Card Systems and manage Eligible Training Provider Lists (ETPL).
2. **Background.** Both of these reports were written prior to the implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) which superseded several relevant statutory provisions of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) under which the study took place.¹ The references in this Training and Employment Notice (TEN) are to WIA; however, the findings are relevant for WIOA implementation.

¹ The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) became law on July 22, 2014, and WIOA supersedes the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA) and amends the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, the Wagner-Peyser Act, and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

To promote State use and linkage of administrative data, the U.S. Department of Labor's (DOL) WDQI grant program funds states to develop state workforce longitudinal databases to provide a comprehensive picture of workers' skill development and earnings throughout their careers.²

ETA contracted with IMPAQ International, LLC (IMPAQ) to conduct two complementary research activities related to the WDQI involving: (1) a survey of all state workforce agency ETPL coordinators, to obtain updated details about their ETPLs, how they are updated, and how the lists are received and used by customers and community colleges; and (2) contact with state WDQI leads in those states already moving to develop performance scorecards, to document scorecard system details and the relationship to their ETPLs, and to identify lessons that may prove useful for other states.

Large, individual-level, administrative databases have increasingly been used to monitor the employment outcomes of job training, post-secondary education, and related social programs. DOL continues to be at the forefront of these efforts, most notably in helping states build the capacity to use quarterly Unemployment Insurance (UI) wage records for tracking individual's employment and earnings after participation in several DOL-administered programs. More recently, there has been growing interest in the use of longitudinal administrative data to measure and report on program outcomes for education and training providers, whether or not the program received WIA or WIOA funding.

Consumer Report Card Systems (CRCSs) are state systems for calculating program outcomes based on labor market data (e.g., employment, retention, and earnings) for those individuals participating in job training and postsecondary programs. These systems provide the public program outcome and other program information on an easy-to-use website that allows users to compare programs and identify those that best suit their needs. Thus, CRCSs play an important role in supporting informed consumer choice that was emphasized in WIA and central to WIOA. In combination with state ETPLs, CRCSs offer the potential to enhance the information that prospective education and job training participants use to make decisions. CRCSs also can provide policy makers and practitioners with useful information to make programmatic adjustments that improve education and job training program service delivery.

3. Study Description.

WDQI Databases Study

This study is based upon the first three rounds of WDQI grants awarded in 2011, 2012, and 2013; which totaled over \$30 million and were awarded to 29 states. It was initiated to obtain information on the linkages between the WDQI grants and state efforts to develop CRCSs, and the potential for more widespread implementation of CRCSs across the country.

² "Workforce Data Quality Initiative (WDQI) Grant Information," U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, <http://www.doleta.gov/performance/workforcedatagrants09.cfm>

The study had three main objectives, to:

- Understand the relationship between WDQI and state efforts to develop CRCSSs;
- Assess the degree to which states without existing CRCSSs are prepared to implement them; and
- Identify how DOL can support the implementation of CRCSSs beyond the states with existing systems and improve the quality of CRCSSs in states that have them.

The study's first paper, entitled *Using WDQI Databases to Develop and Improve Consumer Report Card Systems*, concluded overall that WDQI states with functioning CRCSSs used WDQI grants to improve their CRCSSs. Many WDQI grantee states did not yet have CRCSSs, although some of these states were making progress towards developing CRCSSs with the use of their WDQI grants. The authors indicated a need for continued funding and a significant amount of time, expertise, and resolve to complete that task. Based upon states' experiences to create, or improve CRCSSs using WDQI funding, the authors made two recommendations about how DOL could support widespread implementation of CRCSSs: They are:

- Provide resource support by funding additional WDQI grants focused on the development of CRCSSs and work with the U.S. Department of Education (ED) to facilitate the exchange and dissemination of information among states that have created, or are working to create, CRCSSs, and encourage states to have their education and workforce agencies work more cooperatively.
- Provide other incentives for states to develop CRCSSs by phasing out WIA initial eligibility waivers and working with ED to encourage state support of CRCSSs by systematically publicizing their value to state-level policymakers. (Under WIOA the waivers referenced are no longer in place.)

To ensure that customers choose quality programs that help them get a job in an in-demand field, WIA/WIOA requires training providers to have their programs reviewed and approved to be included on the ETPL. Additionally, to help customers make informed choices about which programs best suit their needs, WIA/WIOA requires the collection and reporting of certain program performance information and costs. While WIA provided a basic structure for these processes, states and local workforce investment boards had a great deal of flexibility to implement the process for selecting which training providers are included on the state's ETPLs. Thus, state ETPL policies and practices varied widely.

IMPAQ fielded a web-based ETPL Coordinator Survey in all states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico to examine ETPL policies and practices. Forty-six states completed the survey between May and June of 2014; the findings are documented in the study's second paper entitled, *How States Manage Eligible Training Provider Lists: Findings from a State Survey*. Findings from the survey have implications for states and DOL and other federal agencies as they pursue efforts to create education and job training program scorecards, especially for institutions of higher education and for ETP programs as part of WIOA. States that use more rigorous processes to make ETPL determinations, use administrative data

sources, and provide a richer, more consistent set of information to help training participants make decisions.

4. **Inquiries**. To view an abstract of these publications, as well as to download the full reports, please visit the ETA Research Publication Database Web site at:
<http://wdr.doleta.gov/research/keyword.cfm>.