



**ARC Workgroup Meeting Highlights
February 28, 2006 – March 1, 2006
Charleston, South Carolina**

Attendees:

David Adams (TX)	Barbara Ledvina (NCSC)
Mike Blank (IA)	Denise E. Lee (NC)
Vicki Boylston (SC)	Jeffrey Nall (IA)
Larry Christison (IL)	John Pearce (OR)
Bob Cottrell (NC)	Dana Placzek (CT)
Steve Duthie (MT)	Steven Rosenow (NCSC)
Sandi Fike (WI)	Marilyn Skalberg (Contractor)
Imaura Harvey (FL)	Bill Stambaugh (NC)
Sylvia Jones (WY)	Teresa Taylor (IA)
Christopher Knight (FL)	

Bob Cottrell reviewed the meeting format (full group and subgroups) and introductions were shared around the room.

Members gave updates on various workgroups, policy councils, initiatives, Employment and Training Administration (ETA), and Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) activities. Specific items discussed included: budget, CIPSEA, SUTA-dumping, wage records, LED, LDB, EDP, career readiness certificates, and LAUS.

Policy/Employer Database Subcommittee Update:

Jeffrey Nall explained that the original Employer Database contract had been held by the state of Maine. Iowa currently holds the master contract with *infoUSA*. When Iowa initially took on the role they reviewed the Maine procurement and then started from scratch with the added experience of users and usages. Questions come up from users periodically and there were some new questions last week. The group will want to review the questions for the next procurement. During the last procurement process the Employer Database team was responsible for looking at what the RFP contained and the team consisted of both policy and technical people.

The last procurement took over four years to complete. The contract was executed in April 2004 and there was a three-year contract with an option for two one-year extensions. The contract ends March 31, 2007. Release of new data is in October 2006. The workgroup opted to take the first year extension and initiate the next procurement. Items such as who would take on the role as lead state, issues surrounding users and usages, and a thorough examination of potential state liability would need to be the first items addressed in the procurement process. The workgroup will be notifying ETA that the workgroup is ready to move forward on a new issuance of the RFP.

Several states added onto their Employer Database license and others were interested in doing so. As an example, Florida used the database for special studies related to hurricanes. The group discussed using the database for disasters and emergencies and incorporating the language into future contracts.

In order to clear up some confusion users of the Employer Database are having in regards to the differences between the QCEW data and Employer Database data, the workgroup will be writing a description of what the Employer Database and QCEW (202) data contain, their similarities and differences, and their uses. The information will be made available on the ARC Web portal FAQ section.

The ADAM system has been completed and delivered to pilot states. ADAM is a set of business rules that allow one to address the data in the ALMIS Database. It provides code so objects are allowed to be shared via a metadata server. Pilot states are to analyze for the next six months. The application framework has a choice of display with goal of providing cross-state distribution. The current objective is to determine the best way to support and maintain the ADAM project.

Education and Communication Subcommittee update: Vicki Boylston said that the Subcommittee had been looking at a significant redesign of the ARC website and asked the workgroup for feedback to help with the redesign. Other items being developed include an annual report, updated fact sheet and newsletter. Please submit all suggestions and content to Marilyn Skalberg.

Due to the number of new DBAs needing training there will be classroom training in Summer 2006. Madison, Wisconsin was decided upon as a tentative training site. Another classroom training would be held after summer. Sites currently under consideration are Texas and California.

The ARC is in the process of obtaining a workshop at Workforce Innovations. We might be soliciting examples where these tools are particularly useful (e.g. Florida mapping Employer Database data for policy purposes). Historically, we have had a booth but that is not necessarily as effective as we would like.

Structure Subcommittee update: The Structure Subcommittee went summarized numerous issues they were addressing including: versions of look-up tables and whether they recycle old codes, review of the ARC website and discussion of the proposed "DBA toolkit", using RSS feeds for various ongoing structure topics, geography structure issues surrounding continual revisions of geography codes (MSAs), addition of JVS, EEO, QWI, benefits survey to the ALMIS Database, empdbinfo table, changing standard field sizes from 8 char to 12 char for tables and from 10 char to 16 char for fields, and a variety of other edits. In regards to the geography issue (changing geog codes), the tentative solution is to have a geography and year crosswalk table and then new areas would get new numbers and that would let you know which area is for which year. It was suggested to get feedback from states on this approach.

The Structure Subcommittee asked whether it would be possible for the Employer Database Committee to add a "release number", a five character field (e.g. 52006) and relate it to an administrative table with the copyright release date as soon as the April 2006 release of data. Adding this field for every record would help ensure the proper copyright information.

The tentative plan for release of Version 2.3.1 of the ALMIS Database is to resolve issues, make changes, revise structure, and produce a clean and annotated version with notes (e.g. increasing table field lengths). Will also be adding load order table as appendix. Bill Stambaugh suggested that a draft could be made available to structure as soon as two weeks and a release of version 2.3.1 in 6 to 8 weeks from the ARC meeting. It was suggested that the Structure Subcommittee firm up the time table taking into consideration the upcoming Workforce Information grant and any resulting impact to state workload.

National Crosswalk Service Center (NCSC) Update: Steve Rosenow handed out an "Activity Update Sheet" from the NCSC which included updates on recent geography issues, O*NET files revised and released including a new laytitle file, non-standard files, listing of database management system software, new staff changes, licensing updates, and e-tool updates for ad hoc items. Steve also gave a summary of statistics for the ARC Portal website (aka www.almisdb.org).

Miscellaneous: The next meeting was tentatively scheduled for Montana in August 2006 and the workgroup would continue their usual three-day meeting format as opposed to the two-day format due to the number of issues that need to be addressed and work that needs to be done.