



## **Survey of FEDES Pilot States**

**June 2008**

**Prepared by Jane Staveley and David Stevens**

**The Jacob France Institute  
University of Baltimore**



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# Survey of FEDES Pilot States

## Introduction

The Jacob France Institute (JFI) conducted a survey of states participating in the Federal Employment Data Exchange System (FEDES) pilot to obtain feedback on a number of issues related to the use of FEDES by participating states. We were interested in knowing whether states are using the FEDES data for federal reporting, state reporting or state program evaluations, and whether they are using the calculated fields prepared by the JFI for reporting under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). Also of interest was which state agencies are using FEDES, and how often they need FEDES data. We asked for suggestions from states on other possible uses of FEDES and improvements that would make FEDES more useful to them. Finally, we asked for a statement of endorsement that would be helpful in recruiting non-participating states.

The survey was made available on line, from January 16 to February 1, 2008, to the contact person in each of the 32 states that participated in the October/November 2007 cycle of FEDES. Surveys were completed by respondents in 25 states. The survey questionnaire is in Appendix A, and responses to the open-ended questions are in Appendix B.

## Survey Results

### **State Uses of FEDES Data**

Federal Reporting. Of the 25 respondents, most said they used, or were planning to use, the matched employment data returned through FEDES for federal reporting (see Table 1 on Page 2). Almost three-quarters of the respondents used it for WIA reporting, and more than half used it for federal reporting under Wagner-Peyser, Veterans Employment and Training Service, and the Trade Adjustment Reform Act. One state commented: “We have discovered the impact of using this data is more decidedly on Wagner-Peyser performance. Typically this results in improved entered employment outcomes by about 1%.” Only a few respondents used the data for Perkins III secondary and postsecondary. This probably reflects the fact that most of the state agencies participating in FEDES are workforce agencies rather than education agencies. Other uses include the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families program (TANF), the Food Stamp Employment and Training program (FSE&T), the Adult and Family Literacy Act performance reporting, Perkins IV and Adult Education.

State Reporting/State Program Evaluations. Eleven states reported that they used the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and United States Postal Service (USPS) data for state reporting or state program evaluations<sup>1</sup>. One state mentioned a biennial

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<sup>1</sup> As of this date, matched data from the Department of Defense, Defense Manpower Data Center (DOD) may only be used for satisfying, or contributing to, federal performance measurement and consumer report activities required by the United States Office of Management and Budget (OMB) or federal law or regulation.

evaluation of 11 state and federally funded workforce programs, and the building of research analysis files for the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges. One state said they used the data for the accountability system and their institutional effectiveness process. Another response mentioned "... breaking out federal performance reports to the state's regional & office level."

**Table 1: State Uses of FEDES**

Uses	Use FEDES		Don't Use FEDES		Don't Know		No Response		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Federal Reporting									
Workforce Investment Act	18	72	5	20	2	8	0	0	25
Wagner Peyser	15	60	7	28	2	8	1	4	25
Veterans Employment & Training Service	13	52	7	28	3	12	2	8	25
Trade Adjustment Reform Act	14	56	7	28	1	4	3	12	25
Perkins III – secondary	4	16	9	36	7	28	5	20	25
Perkins III – postsecondary	6	24	8	32	6	24	5	20	25
Other	3	12	3	12	5	20	14	56	25
State Reporting	11	44	14	56	0	0	0	0	25

Source: The Jacob France Institute, University of Baltimore, January 2008

### Calculated Data Fields

In addition to the matched data fields returned from the three federal agencies, the JFI also includes in each state's files four calculated data fields for each of the federal agencies.<sup>2</sup> These calculated fields are WIASRD-compatible and may be used by the FEDES states for federal reporting for WIA. As well as simplifying the reporting process, the calculated fields provide a consistent method across states for reporting federal employment. About half the survey respondents indicated that they used the calculated fields for their WIA reporting (see Table 2 on Page 3), and one state commented: "We like the change." However, there were a couple of respondents who seemed unsure as to how to use these data.

<sup>2</sup> A description of the calculated fields may be found in "Guide to New WIASRD-Compatible OPM, USPS and DOD Matched Record Data Fields," May 2007 at [http://www.ubalt.edu/jfi/fedes/documents/FEDES\\_GUIDE\\_Final\\_May07.pdf](http://www.ubalt.edu/jfi/fedes/documents/FEDES_GUIDE_Final_May07.pdf)

**Table 2: State Use of Calculated Fields for WIA Reporting**

Federal Data Source	States Using Calculated Fields		States Not Using Calculated Fields		No Response		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Office of Personnel Management (OPM)	13	52	11	44	1	4	25
Department of Defense (DOD)	13	52	11	44	1	4	25
U.S. Postal Service (USPS)	12	48	12	48	1	4	25

Source: The Jacob France Institute, University of Baltimore, January 2008

**State Agencies Using FEDES**

According to those surveyed, state workforce agencies are the primary users of FEDES data. Of the 19 states that responded to the question asking which state agencies use FEDES data, 18 listed state workforce agencies, six listed education agencies<sup>3</sup> and one state listed a Veterans’ agency (see Appendix B for detailed responses.)

**How Often States Need FEDES Data**

The general consensus was that states need to receive the data on a quarterly basis. Twenty states said they needed FEDES data quarterly, two states needed it twice a year, and two states wanted it once a year.

**Other Uses of FEDES and the Importance of FEDES to the States**

There were a number of suggestions for additional uses of FEDES. One state responded:

“The uses of aggregate data are really unlimited. Support for economic development, BLS LMI projections and Unemployment Compensation reporting come to mind.”

Other suggested uses included assessing plans for requesting NEG support for base phase-outs, and expanding the use of FEDES through the proposed implementation of WISPR (Workforce Investment Streamlined Performance Reporting system.)

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<sup>3</sup> One of the states surveyed had two separate agreements for FEDES, one for the workforce agency and one for the education agency.

There were a number of responses that indicated how important FEDES was for their state.

“... this data is TERRIBLY important to *our state*.<sup>4</sup> We have a sizable military presence in the state and that impacts reporting a great deal with our customers being redeployed after exit. The problem is exacerbated for some of our smaller Boards where military bases and other federal employment make up an enormous part of the economy.”

Another state, with experience of federal employment matching prior to FEDES, emphasized the advantages of FEDES, the need for long-term access to federal employment data, and the importance of program reporting that is standardized across states, in particular with regard to the use of a common method for calculating wages:

“Prior to FEDES, we had interagency agreements with OPM, USPS, and DOD to collect these same data. We would wait months, and often have data mishaps in which one or more of the three files was broken or contained errors. Once FEDES was started, results files became much more standardized and usable. It also became unlikely that Federal agencies would contract with individual states to supply data once FEDES was implemented. If FEDES were dropped, we would lose access to a data source that we have been using since the 1990's. Use of FEDES is very important to keep program reporting standardized across the states (as is WRIS). For states that have large Federal employment bases, a standard UI match or WRIS match could understate employment results substantially. Calculation of dollar amounts and quarterly amounts for FEDES also increases its uses substantially. If left to our own algorithms, each state would be creating different wage amounts and possibly even counting employment in different quarters than the others.”

Other states mentioned the usefulness of FEDES for performance measures, said they would hate to see it discontinued and emphasized telling other states how use of FEDES can improve reported performance:

“Participants are not counted in our Federal reports and performance measures until 18 months after they have left the program. When a customer leaves the State to obtain employment elsewhere, the likelihood of getting proof of post-exit employment is exceedingly slim. FEDES data (particularly for those who have enlisted in military service) has been particularly helpful to us in our Youth Performance measures for determining both placement and retention in employment. It is also beneficial for Certificate attainments when a youth receives training through the DOD during the first several months of active service.

We have not spent as much time assessing the full potential of FEDES data

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<sup>4</sup> To preserve anonymity, we have removed the names of individual states from the comments and substituted the word in italics.

because resources are spread so thin. However, I'd hate to see this important service discontinued.”

“I have no other suggestions other than the data is very important for WIA reporting.”

“Impress upon the states that the use of FEDES can only improve reported performance.”

## **Suggestions for Improvements**

There were a number of responses to this question. A couple of responses expressed satisfaction with the current system:

“I wouldn't change a thing. The process for accessing the data is effortless and efficient.”

“The standardization of reported elements has made the data acceptable for common measures purposes.”

One state wanted to expand the uses of the DOD data:

“Greater use of the DOD data would help, particularly for measures of High School follow-up where enlistment in the Military is a very legitimate workforce training option and a positive result. We are left without knowing how many students enter the Military in a way that could help individual High Schools know about their military results.”

Some respondents questioned the scheduling of the quarterly cycles, asking if the data could be made available at an earlier date, if the cycle could be extended, or if the data could be accessed when needed instead of being locked into request cycles. The timing of the cycles is based on the availability of the federal data so advancing the due dates is probably not feasible. However, we will continue to work with the federal agencies to ensure they adhere to the current schedule, and we will continue to maintain some flexibility on the timing of the cycles based on state needs. Accessing the data when needed is not a viable option because this could compromise the confidentiality of the data.

One respondent wanted more information (part of the first name and part of the last name), and one state wanted less (“standardize the FEDES record layout including only what can be reliably used), and another asked to receive the data from all three federal agencies in one file. Due to the confidential nature of the individual records, federal agencies minimize the use of personal identifiers. Returning the data from the federal agencies in one file for each state is also not desirable because the formats and record layouts differ. States can use the calculated fields for their WIA reporting which have a standardized format and include only those data that are needed. A few

respondents expressed difficulty in using the data in the calculated fields suggesting the need for further outreach.

## **Final Comments**

The final comments indicated that states in general were pleased with FEDES:

“We are very pleased with the system and find it far more useful than WRIS because we are allowed to use it more broadly.”

A number of respondents emphasized the importance of FEDES for performance measurement.

“The data is very useful for evaluating the performance of federal employment and training programs, especially in local areas that have significant federal employment.”

“This information is used primarily for WIA performance reporting. *The State’s*<sup>5</sup> Adult and Dislocated Worker performance is improved because of the availability of this data. We would like to see availability of FEDES data continued on a quarterly basis.”

“Finding wages in WRIS and FEDES definitely boosted our performance outcomes. (Approximately 4% increase in entered employment rate, for each of the two systems.)”

“Analysis of effectiveness is still ongoing, but it appears, along with WRIS, to have had a major positive impact upon Veteran performance outcomes.”

“I receive about 5 - 10 requests each month from local program staff who need verification of exited participants' attachment to the U.S. Armed Forces and the US Postal Service. Prior to the availability of FEDES data, participants connected to either of these organizations counted negatively in our WIA Title 1 performance measures. At the State level, the impact on performance is relatively small; at the local (i.e., WIB) level, this data has a significant positive impact on performance outcomes - especially in areas where participant cohorts are small. While a non-participating state might not see any benefit in having this data available, I believe their local programs would find the data helpful in improving their performance outcomes. It would likely reduce case manager workloads in terms of trying to hunt down participants for outcome information.”

Some states also commented favorably on the FEDES process:

“FEDES is a very useful method for getting federal employment results and earnings measured in your performance reports and for some types of state

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<sup>5</sup> See footnote 4.

research. Transmission of data is prompt and on secure servers. If your programs lead to federal employment, particularly employment that could be out-of-state, this is a very good way to pick up program results.”

“At any time the outcomes from FEDES may be the difference between making performance or not. The transfer and retrieval of the information is quite simple once you get it set up.”

“Easy to use, takes little time to prepare and collect the data and greatly reduces the time and effort spent gathering the data independently. It almost makes too much sense.”

And the support from FEDES staff:

“I have been pleased to see that some of the improvements I have recommended have been made to the system. The results have improved over the past several years, and I find that the contact people have been quite open to suggestions.”

FEDES should be expanded to other states:

“We encourage and support the ongoing collaboration to keep FEDES operable and useful. We strongly encourage expansion to other states to jointly benefit all participants.”

## **Conclusion**

Most respondents indicated that their states used FEDES for federal reporting and almost half said they used FEDES for state reporting and program evaluations. About half stated they used the calculated data fields but respondents in some states appear to be unsure as to how to use these data. According to the survey, the primary users of FEDES are state workforce agencies and there are a few state education agencies. States generally want to receive the data on a quarterly basis.

The open-ended questions generated a number of detailed responses. States were generally pleased with FEDES and emphasized its importance to them for performance measurement, and said that it should be expanded to other states. The advantage over pre-FEDES federal employment matching was mentioned, particularly since FEDES standardizes federal employment reporting across states. There were some suggestions for other uses of FEDES and suggestions for improvements, including expanding the allowed uses of DOD data. While a few respondents expressed difficulty in using the data, there were others who found the data easy to use and the process effortless and efficient.

## **Recommendations**

### **Continue Quarterly Cycles of the FEDES Pilot**

Based on the overwhelming support from the states surveyed, we recommend the continued funding of FEDES to provide states with the ability to obtain federal employment data for federal performance reporting and other permitted uses. We recommend that the data exchanges continue to occur on a quarterly basis.

### **Conduct Outreach to Non-participant States**

Currently 39 states and the District of Columbia are participating in the FEDES pilot. Based on comments from states in the survey on the importance of FEDES for federal reporting and the advantages of using data that are standardized across states, we recommend reaching out to include states that are not yet participating in the FEDES pilot.

### **Conduct Outreach to Participant States on Use of the Calculated Fields**

Some states indicated that they were not using the calculated fields and did not have a clear understanding as to how to use the data. A written Guide has been circulated to FEDES states and is available on the FEDES web site, and JFI staff members have responded to specific questions from states about the calculated fields. In addition to further promoting the Guide and responding to individual questions, we recommend conducting training sessions for the staff who work with FEDES in participating states to demonstrate the use of the calculated fields.

### **Conduct Outreach to Non-participant State Agencies in FEDES States**

Most states surveyed indicated that the FEDES data were used by state workforce agencies. We recommend outreach to other state agencies who might find the FEDES data useful, such as state education and TANF agencies.

### **Suggest Additional Uses of OPM and USPS data**

Advise FEDES states on additional uses of the OPM and USPS data, including performance reporting for other federal programs, and for state performance measurement and program evaluations.

### **Expand Allowed Uses of DOD Data**

We recommend meeting with DOD staff to discuss amending the data sharing agreement to expand the uses of DOD data to encompass state reporting and performance measurement.

### **Prepare for Proposed Implementation of WISPR**

We recommend aligning earnings calculation programming and additional codes developed for WIASRD with the Department of Labor's proposed new Workforce Investment Streamlined Performance Reporting system (WISPR) data fields.

### **Continue to Include the Maximum Number of Fields Needed by States**

We recommend continuing to include the maximum number of fields needed by all FEDES states in each state's files. The development of customized files for each FEDES state would require substantial additional resources.

## **Appendix A: Survey Questionnaire**

## 1. Introduction

Dear FEDES Pilot State Contact Person:

Your feedback is the most valuable tool we have. Please take a moment to answer a few questions about your state's participation in the FEDES pilot. This is a brief survey that will only take a few minutes to fill out. Most important, it will provide us with valuable information needed to make the case for continued DOL funding for the FEDES.

## 2. FEDES Uses

### 1. Does your state use the matched federal employment data from FEDES for federal reporting?

	Yes	No	Don't know
WIA (Workforce Investment Act)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wagner-Peyser	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
VETS (Veterans Employment & Training Service)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
TAA (Trade Adjustment Reform Act)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Perkins III (Carl D. Perkins Vocational & Technical Education Act 1998) - secondary	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Perkins III - postsecondary	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please describe in the comment box below)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comment

### 2. Does your state use the FEDES data for state reporting or state program evaluations?

- Yes  
 No

Please describe state uses of FEDES data in the box below

**3. Does your state use the calculated fields prepared by the JFI for your WIA reporting?**

	Yes	No
Calculated fields for OPM	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Calculated fields for USPS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Calculated fields for DOD	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

In the box below, please enter any comments you might have concerning the calculated fields, particularly with regard to uses of the DOD data that are now prohibited.

**4. In the box below, please list the agencies in your state that use FEDES data.**

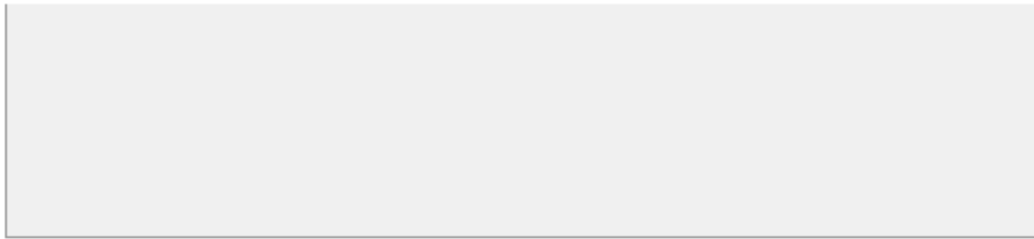
**5. How often does your state need FEDES data to satisfy all needs?**

- Quarterly
- Twice a year
- Once a year

Other (please specify)

**6. Can you suggest any other uses of FEDES that would help us convey to DOL the importance of FEDES to the states?**

**7. Do you have any suggestions for improvements that would make FEDES more useful for your state?**



### 3. Thank You

Thank you for your feedback. It will help us in designing enhancements to FEDES that will benefit participating states.

**8. Any final comments? A brief statement of endorsement would be helpful to us in recruiting non-participating states.**

#### 9. Survey Respondent: Contact Information

Name	<input type="text"/>
Title	<input type="text"/>
State agency	<input type="text"/>
State	<input type="text"/>

## Appendix B: Open-Ended Responses<sup>6</sup>

### Question 1: Does your state use the matched federal employment data from FEDES for federal reporting?

- *Our state* has just commenced using FEDES data with the first quarter PY 2007 quarterly reporting.
- The data is available for TAA if they want it; so far, it hasn't been as valuable to them as it is to those of us on the WIA Title 1 side. If DOL moves to negotiating performance measures for all programs, I suspect FEDES data will become more important to them.
- May begin Carl Perkins next quarter.
- We use FEDES data in calculation of results necessary to measure the performance of schools and programs seeking to be included on *the State's* Eligible Training Provider list and display results in our jobtrainingresults.org website. FEDES data are also used in Adult and Family Literacy Act performance reporting.
- We submit the matches and have incorporated the results in test, but have not yet incorporated it in production for the actual federal reporting.
- We have discovered the impact of using this data is more decidedly on Wagner-Peyser performance. Typically this results in improved entered employment outcomes by about 1%.
- TANF, FSE&T, various state employment programs.
- Please note that the yes answers are planned use for PY 2007 results.
- Our plans are to use FEDES for federal reporting sometime this year, hopefully before the next annual reports. WIA, WP, Vets and TAA.
- Perkins IV and Adult Education.

### Question 2: Does your state use the FEDES data for state reporting or state program evaluations?

- Only to the extent of breaking out federal performance reports to the state's regional & office level.

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<sup>6</sup> To preserve anonymity, we have removed the names of individual states from the comments and substituted the word(s) in italics. Otherwise, the comments are reproduced verbatim without editing.

- We use the OPM and USPS FEDES results for Workforce Training Results, a biennial evaluation of 11 State and Federally funded workforce programs. (Use of the DOD results is not permitted under the FEDES data sharing agreement.) FEDES results for OPM and USPS are also used in building research analysis files for the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges.
- We have the results in test and only use it for entered employment and retention, but have not yet been able to use it for wage change. We have so few hits in *our state* that it does not change the outcomes to a great degree, but does help at times.
- Used for WIA and Wagner-Peyser to improve performance measures. The *State's* Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, through data sharing agreement, has used FEDES to adjust performance outcomes for entered employment of its Adult Education and Literacy program participants.
- Pretty much the same as above.
- State welfare - TANF and dislocated worker programs are also included in common measures, so use is intended for this current program year.
- The Department of Defense wages are given to another section in our agency.
- The data is used for the accountability system and for institutional effectiveness process.
- *Our state* uses the wage data in reporting earnings for the above mentioned programs.
- Perkins Reporting.

Question 3: Does your state use the calculated fields prepared by the JFI for your WIA reporting?

- We treat FEDES data as "Supplemental Employment Data". While I think some of our local staff would like us to use the wage data to a greater extent, at the state level, there simply isn't enough of it to make much of an impact on performance. Conversely, I suspect there are other states who find it incredibly valuable.
- Still need to study the USPS data we've received further. Initially confused about annual wages (which we can't use) vs quarterly wages, and what appeared to be conflicting info for a given SSN. But, admit I may be reading it incorrectly.
- I have concerns that the calculated fields overstate earnings, but appreciate the convenience of having the calculated fields. When we unduplicate across data sources, we always use the UI or WRIS version of the employment record instead of the FEDES version on the assumption that the UI or WRIS version is defined more

consistently to the UI definitions. Overstating earnings becomes less important now that earnings performance measures are no longer based on pre-program earnings amounts.

- We like the change.
- Since calculated fields were not initially available, we have not changed our processing to use the calculated fields. We had some concerns about the calculated fields. For example, were concerned that some of the "employed" fields were set for a quarter and no wages were reported for the quarter. We saw no documentation on what that means, or how these fields have been derived. As such it was determined not to use the calculated fields at this time. We determined employed if wages were earned for the quarter.
- Not for years prior to PY 2007.
- We have not used the calculated fields to date but we plan to use them for the next annual report.
- WIA is coordinated by *our* Workforce Commission not by *our* higher Education Coordinating Board. They may use them.
- We use the non 0 wages.

Question 4: Please list the agencies in your state that use FEDES data

- *The* Department of Industrial Relations, Employment Service.
- *The* Dept of Labor and Industry only.
- Department of Workforce Development, Division of Employment & Training - for WIA Title 1 programs only. We would make it available to Wagner Peyser, TAA and Vets, if so requested. No other programs or agencies have asked about the data - and I doubt they're aware of its existence. I certainly don't go out and advertise that I have access to it!
- Labor and Industry.  
Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education.
- *The* Department of Workforce Services. (WIA, TAA, WP, VETS).  
Possibly the State Office of Education (Carl Perkins) will in the future.
- *The* Department of Commerce and *the* Board of Regents.

- Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board, Department of Employment Security, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, *the State University's Social and Economic Sciences Research Center (SESRC)*.
- *The Department of Commerce.*
- Department of Labor.
- *The Division of Workforce Development, Department of Economic Development. The Division of Employment Security, Department of Industrial Relations. Career Education Division, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.*
- *The Workforce Commission and the Veterans Commission.*
- Only the Department of Labor and Workforce Development for use in calculating common measures.
- 1. *State Employment* and 2. *Department of Community Colleges and Workforce Development.*
- Department of Workforce Development.
- *The Higher Education Coordinating Board uses the FEDES data for our own use, the Education Agency (K-12 and adult education system), the Youth Commission, Rehabilitation Commission. The Workforce Commission is using the data but they are on a separate contract.*
- *The Department of Labor.*
- *The State Department of Labor.*
- *State Workforce Development.*
- To my knowledge, *the State's Job Service* is the only agency that uses FEDES data.

Question 5: How often does your state need FEDES data to satisfy all needs?

- At this point we are still experimenting with timing, cohorts to be submitted, discovery rate, etc. Since *the state* is in the throes of bringing fully on-line a brand new workforce development operating system it may take time to fully evaluate needs and effectiveness.
- We request it quarterly for WIA and less often for other uses.

- When we begin using FEDES we will need to receive it quarterly for our federal reporting.

Question 6: Can you suggest any other uses of FEDES that would help us convey to DOL the importance of FEDES to the states?

- Not at this time.
- Participants are not counted in our Federal reports and performance measures until 18 months after they have left the program. When a customer leaves the State to obtain employment elsewhere, the likelihood of getting proof of post-exit employment is exceedingly slim. FEDES data (particularly for those who have enlisted in military service) has been particularly helpful to us in our Youth Performance measures for determining both placement and retention in employment. It is also beneficial for Certificate attainments when a youth receives training through the DOD during the first several months of active service. We have not spent as much time assessing the full potential of FEDES data because resources are spread so thin. However, I'd hate to see this important service discontinued.
- The uses of aggregate data are really unlimited. Support for economic development, BLS LMI projections and Unemployment Compensation reporting come to mind.
- Prior to FEDES, we had interagency agreements with OPM, USPS, and DOD to collect these same data. We would wait months, and often have data mishaps in which one or more of the three files was broken or contained errors. Once FEDES was started, results files became much more standardized and usable. It also became unlikely that Federal agencies would contract with individual states to supply data once FEDES was implemented. If FEDES were dropped, we would lose access to a data source that we have been using since the 1990's. Use of FEDES is very important to keep program reporting standardized across the states (as is WRIS). For states that have large Federal employment bases, a standard UI match or WRIS match could understate employment results substantially. Calculation of dollar amounts and quarterly amounts for FEDES also increases its uses substantially. If left to our own algorithms, each state would be creating different wage amounts and possibly even counting employment in different quarters than the others.
- Through the proposed implementation of WISPR, by USDOL, we would expand the use of FEDES.
- Not additional uses but I can tell you that this data is TERRIBLY important to *our state*. We have a sizable military presence in the state and that impacts reporting a great deal with our customers being redeployed after exit. The problem is exacerbated for some of our smaller Boards where military bases and other federal employment make up an enormous part of the economy.

- Assessing plans for requesting NEG support for base phase-outs.
- I have no other suggestions other than the data is very important for WIA reporting.
- The connection between education and work is of utmost importance in our state.
- Impress upon the states that the use of FEDES can only improve reported performance.

Question 7: Do you have any suggestions for improvements that would make FEDES more useful for your state?

- Return wage data sooner. Waiting until the first week of the second month is almost too late.
- Not at this time.
- I wouldn't change a thing. The process for accessing the data is effortless and efficient.
- It would be helpful to have the data farther ahead of the reporting deadlines, by a week or two.
- The only thing we really need is the ability to request the data when we need it instead of being locked into request cycles.
- Greater use of the DOD data would help, particularly for measures of High School follow-up where enlistment in the Military is a very legitimate workforce training option and a positive result. We are left without knowing how many students enter the Military in a way that could help individual High Schools know about their military results.
- Give us at least a part of the name, both first and last, to help us more clearly identify the people. Also, we really need the same format for all three files.
- We would like for the data to be "cleaner" and the data structure easier to use, regarding the conversion between quarterly and semi-annual data.
- Get it to use a few weeks earlier. Our data sets are so big that we can only run them on weekends and we need to do a lot of massaging of the data before its submitted. The current schedule doesn't always allow us to use FEDES for the most recent quarter we're reporting.
- For Data Processing:  
The single most important item that can be done would be to standardize the FEDES record layout with only what can be reliably used. As a minimum, the record can

have Source (OPM, USPS, DOD, etc), SSN, State, Year, Quarter, and Wage. Eliminate the 8 quarters of wages in one record and process 1 qtr per record. If you feel it necessary to put 8 quarters in one record, put the year and quarter with the occurrence of the wages.

- The standardization of reported elements has made the data acceptable for common measures purposes.
- It would be nice to have all the data from USPS, DOD and OPM come back to the states in one file instead of the four files.
- Our delay in using FEDES was because wages were annual wages and not broken down by quarterly wages. If that has changed, and it sounds as if it has, we may begin using wages perhaps this quarter. If not this quarter then very soon.
- Extend the cycle. A couple of days are not enough of a window for submission. Automate it and make it more like WRIS
- The most difficult part of obtaining FEDES wages is the difficulty of how the data is returned. For DOL wage reporting, it is necessary to report the actual wages an individual receives for a particular quarter. The way we get the data returned to us from OPM, USPS, and DOD causes a manual process and then we are only able to identify that the individual was employed during a specific but not the exact wages, so we can only report the results from FEDES as supplemental wages which does not count in the average earnings performance measure.

Question 8: Any final comments? A brief statement of endorsement would be helpful to us in recruiting non-participating states.

- Analysis of effectiveness is still ongoing, but it appears, along with WRIS, to have had a major positive impact upon Veteran performance outcomes.
- This information is used primarily for WIA performance reporting. *The State's* Adult and Dislocated Worker performance is improved because of the availability of this data. We would like to see availability of FEDES data continued on a quarterly basis.
- I receive about 5 - 10 requests each month from local program staff who need verification of exited participants' attachment to the U.S. Armed Forces and the US Postal Service. Prior to the availability of FEDES data, participants connected to either of these organizations counted negatively in our WIA Title 1 performance measures. At the State level, the impact on performance is relatively small; at the local (i.e., WIB) level, this data has a significant positive impact on performance outcomes - especially in areas where participant cohorts are small. While a non-participating state might not see any benefit in having this data available, I believe their local programs would find the data helpful in improving their performance outcomes. It would likely reduce case manager workloads in terms of

trying to hunt down participants for outcome information.

Please feel free to use my comments and refer non-participating states to me if they have questions or would like more feedback.

- Finding wages in WRIS and FEDES definitely boosted our performance outcomes. (Approximately 4% increase in entered employment rate, for each of the two systems.)
- FEDES is a very useful method for getting federal employment results and earnings measured in your performance reports and for some types of state research. Transmission of data is prompt and on secure servers. If your programs lead to federal employment, particularly employment that could be out-of-state, this is a very good way to pick up program results.
- I have been pleased to see that some of the improvements I have recommended have been made to the system. The results have improved over the past several years, and I find that the contact people have been quite open to suggestions.
- We encourage and support the ongoing collaboration to keep FEDES operable and useful. We strongly encourage expansion to other states to jointly benefit all participants.  
We would support the establishment of an advisory committee, composed of representatives from all participating states, to meet periodically to overview operations, concerns and develop improvements as well as expansion to non-participating states.
- At any time the outcomes from FEDES may be the difference between making performance or not. The transfer and retrieval of the information is quite simple once you get it set up.
- We are very pleased with the system and find it far more useful than WRIS because we are allowed to use it more broadly.
- If the records can be standardized and well documented, the integration with external systems (the states) would become more streamlined and less time/resource/money restrictive.
- The data is very useful for evaluating the performance of federal employment and training programs, especially in local areas that have significant federal employment.
- Through no fault of yours we have not had the technical capacity to benefit from FEDES to date in spite of our best intentions.
- Easy to use, takes little time to prepare and collect the data and greatly reduces the time and effort spent gathering the data independently. It almost makes too much sense.