Letter supporting re-establishing the Federal Employment Data Exchange System

January 29, 2024

To: US Department of Defense/Defense Manpower Data Center
US Office of Personnel Management
US Department of Education/Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education
US Department of Education/Rehabilitation Services Administration
US Department of Labor /Employment and Training Administration
US Department of Labor /Veterans Employment and Training Service

We are writing on behalf of the National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA), the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR), and the National Association of State Directors of Adult Education (NASDAE) to urge the speedy re-establishment of the Federal Employment Data Exchange System, or FEDES. We understand several Federal agencies are partnering to re-establish FEDES and we applaud your efforts.

NASWA's membership is comprised of workforce agencies in all states, the District of Columbia, and U.S. territories. CSAVR is composed of the chief administrators of the public rehabilitation agencies serving individuals with physical and mental disabilities in the States, District of Columbia, and the territories. NASDAE is organized by state directors of adult education and offers membership to 50 states and territories. All three organizations are nonprofit and non-partisan entities.

When FEDES was "temporarily" suspended in early 2018, NASWA voiced concerns on behalf of state program administrators. FEDES is a critical dataset for state workforce and partner agencies to understand and report on program outcomes, especially in states with a large percentage of military and other Federal government workers. Under the Federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, or WIOA, states must report on the performance outcomes of workforce programs and related investments that provide employment, rehabilitative, and career education and training services to such priority populations as veterans, the unemployed, persons with disabilities, public assistance recipients, and dislocated workers. The employment and wage data available through FEDES is necessary for ensuring state and local agencies can document the

performance outcomes with respect to federal government and military employees. The re-establishment of FEDES will thus ensure more accurate and complete data being provided from the states to the federal level. For example, for vocational rehabilitation agencies it would supplement state unemployment insurance and SWIS data which do not include Federal employment.

FEDES is also critical for incorporating federal and military employment outcomes in more extensive state research and evaluation efforts. Ideally, it would be used with other available employment and wage data to answer such questions as “What is the time to reemployment of dislocated workers, returning service members, or unemployment insurance claimants?” “How do services outcomes for persons with disabilities vary based on geographic or demographic factors?” and “Does a workforce or education strategy improve employment outcomes?”

The U.S. faces significant labor market challenges, and data is a critical asset as state agencies and their federal partners focus on improving job quality, addressing workforce shortages, increasing occupational access, and improving employment and earnings outcomes for specific populations. We encourage federal agencies to collaborate to ensure that FEDES returns as a valuable data asset for state agencies.

Sincerely,

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