



DRAFT REPORT OF THE
ALC DATA-SHARING AND DATA-DRIVEN DECISION-MAKING SUBCOMMITTEE
December 14, 2020

I. **Background**

Act 943 of 2019 created the Data-Sharing and Data-Driven Decision-Making Taskforce and tasked the Legislature to discover how the state can produce a quick and efficient data-driven delivery system that would enable up-to-the-moment responses to inquiries from the legislative and executive branches. The Data-Sharing and Data-Driven Decision-Making Task Force expired on December 31, 2019, and, as required, the Task Force presented its findings and recommendations to the Arkansas Legislative Council (ALC).

On January 17, 2020, the ALC created the ALC Special Subcommittee on Data-Sharing and Data-Driven Decision-Making to continue the work of the Task Force pursuant to ALC Rule 5.(c). The subcommittee shall study and examine the possibility of implementing a shared services model for statewide data-sharing and submit a final report of its recommendations, including any proposed legislation to the ALC, at its December 2020 meeting. The ALC Special Subcommittee on Data-Sharing and Data-Driven Decision-Making will expire December 31, 2020.

II. **Work of the Subcommittee in 2020**

The subcommittee met twice and heard testimony from state officials with data-driven experience who provided information regarding how a shared services model would provide quality services for the State of Arkansas. The following testimonies were presented.

Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS)/ Data and Transparency Panel

Joshua McGee, the state's Chief Data Officer (CDO), stated Act 912 of 2017 established the Data and Transparency Panel and the Chief Data Officer position. Act 936 of 2019 required the Data and Transparency Panel to develop a unified longitudinal system that links existing agency information to create education-to-workforce data. The SLDS would connect administrative data across state agencies to improve policy, programs, and practices through evidence-based collaboration. The Data and Transparency Panel has completed a feasibility and cost study on the system as well as identified data which will be included.

A data governance framework, along with the SLDS infrastructure, is being built to help facilitate connecting data.

The SLDS infrastructure will be implemented in the state data center and managed by the Division of Information Services. Mr. McGee further discussed adding new datasets into the SLDS. The primary goal is to first incorporate education-to-workforce data. Once the initial steps have been taken, the state should look at aspects such as Pre-K through grade 12, adult education, labor and licensing, and rehabilitation programs.

A primary necessity is a Data-Sharing Agreement (DSA), which must be signed by all agencies before the sharing of data or products can be created. The current DSA is time-consuming which makes sharing data difficult, therefore, a new enterprise DSA is being created that will result in a smoother process. Mr. McGee stressed that a citizen's data portal should be created. The state currently provides economic data through the transparency website and other locations, but there is no one location where an individual can go to retrieve all economic, demographic, and financial data. This would enhance transparency for the citizens of Arkansas.

The Data and Transparency Panel is comprised of members from different departments of state government, with the exception of a few departments, such as Agriculture; Energy and Environment; and Parks, Heritage and Tourism. All departments should be represented and have an agency data officer to create a more efficient conversation of collaboration, and coordinate with the Chief Data Officer regarding policies and procedures.

Economic Securities Report

Kris Jones, Assistant Director, Division of Workforce Services (DWS), provided a summary of the 2019 Economic Securities Report (ESR). The report was created from citizens' data, and by combining education level and wage data to provide Arkansans and state government entities a data-driven review of the current economic condition of the state.

One data statistic that is analyzed in the report is employment of an individual in accordance with their degree program after completion. DWS stated they are looking into ways the report can have up-to-the-moment data, since the data currently has a three-month delay. One factor DWS is trying to incorporate into the report is how past experience can affect the ability to be hired.

Nathan Smith, Research Director, Department of Commerce (DOC), stated when working with higher education institutions, DOC analyzes the ESR when issuing a workforce analysis over a specific program. The workforce analysis will provide the institution with data detailing what a specific program can offer students in the form of wages and employment opportunities; however, the institution does not have to implement the analysis. There are limits to the ESR in terms of economic data outside the state, self-employment, and more. The DOC pulls data from other entities such as the American Community Survey which is part of the United States Census Bureau.

Arkansas Department of Health

Dr. Austin Porter, Chief Deputy Science Officer, Department of Health (ADH), spoke on how the agency gathers Covid-19 data through data-driven techniques. The first positive virus case in Arkansas was verified on March 11, 2020, and through contact tracing, the department has been able to identify virus clusters. ADH currently provides Governor Asa Hutchinson with Covid-19 data to include in his daily briefings. Information is provided on active cases by county on the ADH website, along with guidelines on how citizens can protect themselves.

III. **Legislative Recommendations**

- A master data sharing agreement across all departments will establish consistent data governance rules and will facilitate increased data sharing between departments.
- Expand the Data Transparency Panel to include all departments in the conversation of data sharing.
- Fully fund the Statewide Longitudinal Data System to expand data driven tools to help Arkansans develop key workforce skills and connect to employment opportunities.
- Establish agency data officers across all state departments to be the primary contact for data management and data governance needs.
- Develop a citizen portal to provide Arkansans with greater access to state government data to increase transparency and accountability.

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