



November 8, 2004

Mr. Byron Zuidema
Regional Administrator
U.S. Department of Labor/ETA
230 South Dearborn St., Room 638
Chicago, Illinois 60604

Dear Mr. Zuidema:

On behalf of the State of Wisconsin, and as requested in the September 24, 2004 Training and Employment Guidance letter (TEGL) NO. 5-04, I am pleased to submit an original, signed copy of the State Plan for the PY2004 Wagner-Peyser Reemployment Services (RES) allotment of \$941,759.

The allotted funds will be used by Job Service to further expand our capacity to provide services to "at-risk" UI Claimants, and to provide more intensive reemployment services to facilitate a prompt return to the workforce with employment that conforms to their identified needs.

Over the one-year period ending June 30, 2005, the following outcomes will be achieved:

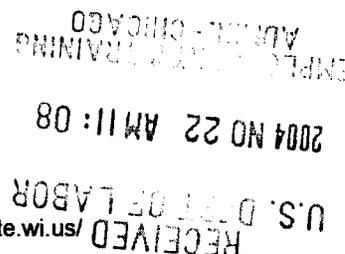
- Maintain number of UI claimant referrals to orientation;
- Maintain the high UI Trust Fund savings;
- Reduce the number of UI claimants that exhaust benefits;
- Increase the number of UI claimants referred to, and completing, services.

We look forward to your prompt approval of the plan.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact Mr. Brian Solomon at 608-267-7514.

Sincerely,

Bill Clingan
Division Administrator



State of Wisconsin

Reemployment Services Plan

Program Year 2004

I. Background and Need

For the last two program years, the state plan for Reemployment Services (RES) in Wisconsin has demonstrated that those individuals with the highest likelihood of exhausting their benefits, and who receive intensive and staff-assisted services early in their initial unemployment insurance claim, are returning to work. Thus, this state plan is developed with the demonstrated experience of the last two program years, as well as current and future economic conditions in the State. The plan also includes several initial experiences, of the Wisconsin and DOL's Demonstration Grant Project for Reemployment Services, which merit mention and possible plan consideration.

According to the State of Wisconsin's Department of Revenue, in its September Wisconsin Economic Outlook Quarterly Report, the State's economic outlook for 2004 has improved. Non-farm employment is now expected to increase by 1.4%, slightly higher than the growth rate anticipated previously. Similarly, Wisconsin's total personal income is now projected to increase 5.9%, which is also greater than the previous forecast.

The twelve-month period, July 2003 to June 2004, showed an average, not seasonally adjusted, unemployment rate of 5.3 percent. This is an improvement compared to the July 2002 to June 2003 period, which showed an average unemployment rate of 5.7 percent. While decreases in unemployment rates, from an annual standpoint, were universal, the fact remains that the unemployment rates are still higher than average, given a ten-year standard, and that some regions of the state are not recovering to the same degree as others.

A continuing reduction in Wagner-Peyser funding in Wisconsin and reduced availability to staff Job Centers, has placed an increased focus on targeting the use of Worker Profiling and Reemployment Services (WPRS) dollars to serve laid-off workers, who are most in need of services, in order to transition them back to employment. Thus, a significant and continuing need for RES services remains a basis for the provision of such services in PY2004.

II. Program Design

The PY04 RES program design is minimally changed from the very effective model used in PY03 that enhanced direct service delivery to Unemployment Insurance (UI) Claimants. Wisconsin will continue to make WPRS services available, through its Job Center network, utilizing current Bureau of Job Service permanent, project, and limited term staff. We anticipate that no new sites will be added in PY04, primarily due to the expected turnover of staff, and the State's Budget Office-imposed hiring freeze. In locations where individual staff assignments include both WPRS and Trade Act responsibilities, we foresee a possible reduction in WPRS activity, as TAA services must receive the priority.

It is the policy of Wisconsin Job Service to provide the following services to profiled UI claimants at locations where the RES program is funded:

Re-employment Services Orientation

- Job Service staff conduct Reemployment Services Orientation Sessions at least monthly, as scheduled through the UI Mainframe.
- Sessions may be conducted weekly in locations where the "pool" of claimants is at least 15 claimants and where both funding and staff allocations allow. More than one session can be scheduled in a week where staff availability allows. On average, seven (7) to fifteen (15) claimants are to be scheduled for each session. However, the time of the year influences the size of the pool. In general, groups in excess of seven (7) claimants justify the designation of more than one staff to conduct individual assessments.
- All claimants who participate in WPRS services **must** register on touchscreen JobNet, the State's on-line job order system, in the Resource Room at their Job Center. This establishes their Wagner-Peyser registration, and allows staff to post those services that have provided to the claimant.

Initial Service Requirements (Tiers)

- Staff conducts a one-on-one Reemployment Assessment with each claimant to assess their service needs. This meeting may include a review of a claimant self-assessment document.
- Staff assists each claimant in completing an Individual Service Plan, identifying activities required of the claimant as a condition of their continued eligibility for UI benefits.
- Staff and claimants determine which Reemployment Services are included in the Individual Service Plan, by choosing from among the following:
 - Job search using JobNet in the Job Center Resource Room;
 - Job search using Internet at home with weekly email or phone call to staff on progress;

- Job search using toll-free Job Line at home with phone calls to staff on progress;
- Required attendance at Job Search workshops;
- Additional one-on-one meetings with staff.

Claimant Follow-Up - In the fall of 2003, Wisconsin Job Service conducted a RES Program staff survey regarding the follow-up component of the program. (See next paragraph below.) While there were varying views on the effectiveness and benefits of follow-up, the majority of staff felt that follow-up (and documenting results on follow-up spreadsheets) was not the most effective way they could use their time in Reemployment Services. Many staff commented that they felt their time would be better spent scheduling and providing more actual reemployment services orientations and providing referrals for services, than in spending time following up with claimants who had already been through the orientation. As a result of that survey and further communications with Job Service management, the follow-up component was discontinued in April 2004.

The intent of follow-up was for staff to perform "status checks" with claimants over time - to determine employment status, ask, "how can we help?" and make an offer of services. Staff maintain a standard follow-up log on the DWD network indicating follow-up activity with **ALL** claimants at about 12 weeks from their valid new claim (VNC) date, or 7 to 8 weeks from the date of the Orientation Session. Follow-up methods were left to local office discretion, and included telephone, mail, email, and individual appointment.

Even with a modest funding reduction of 0.4% for PY04, Wisconsin Job Service anticipates that we will be referred approximately the same number of claimants in PY04 as in PY03. In PY03, the Unemployment Insurance Division of the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Developed profiled and referred 20,919 initial UI claimants to Job Service for WPRS.

III. Timeline and Milestones

Previously reported improvement plans have now been implemented. Staff handbooks were developed and training provided. The following claimant notification letter changes were put in place: 1) Particular focus on a more positive tone regarding the benefits of involvement in reemployment services, 2) The inclusion of "text boxes" in Hmong and Spanish languages, and 3) A TTY number for those claimants who are deaf, or hearing or speech impaired.

DOL Demonstration Project—Wisconsin Reemployment Connection

Wisconsin's Department of Workforce Development, together with the U.S. Department of Labor, is conducting a demonstration project to find ways to better connect unemployment insurance (UI) claimants with available reemployment services.

Project Goals

- Implement new approaches to increase awareness of reemployment services available through Wisconsin's One-Stop System.
- Connect unemployment insurance claimants with employment and/or Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Title I training, preferably in a key target industry in need of skilled workers.
- Provide project participants with the effective work skills that will be valuable in assisting them to permanently succeed in the workforce of "Grow Wisconsin." (Governor Jim Doyle's plan, vision, and strategy to create good paying jobs and a "high end" economy.)
- Increase collaboration between One-Stop Centers and Wisconsin's Unemployment Insurance program.

While Wisconsin is only a few months into the demonstration project, already we recognize several features of this project that have potential for increased efficiency and quality of service for the WPRS program:

- Automatic data transfer of UI claimant records to the WIA case management system (ASSET), creating a Wagner-Peyser registration.
- Inclusion of a more comprehensive claimant self-assessment and work history with the invitation to attend the WPRS orientation session.
- Implement statewide, the automatic partial Wagner-Peyser registration in ASSET of profiled UI claimants developed for the DOL Demonstration, mentioned in the first bullet; consider an update to our internet registration piece so that if a UI Claimant comes into the Job Center, they would only need to add the missing information to complete their registration.

Wisconsin will continue to monitor the project's progress to help in determining what new services and best practices could come from it, so we can consider incorporation of these into the way we deliver RES services.

IV. Program Linkages

Wisconsin will continue to connect and integrate UI Claimants into the Job Center Network, through the WPRS Program, to provide a full range of seamless services necessary to return them to the workforce. One of the most important connections, for those workers needing skill training for reemployment, continues to be the WIA Dislocated Worker Program. Numerous referrals to this program occur as result of the WPRS orientation sessions.

In locations where Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) or Local Veterans' Employment Representative (LVER) staff are present, Job Service staff refer veteran UI claimants directly to the veteran program staff from the WPRS orientations. If a significant number of veterans are scheduled for a particular orientation, the veteran program staff often assists in providing the WPRS orientation and in providing referrals to other veteran services.

Other Job Center and Community-based services are a focus of information and referrals to services that are part of the WPRS orientation sessions. Job Center Network Partner program information (often in the form of handouts and applications), as well as appropriate services, is shared, and available from the following partners:

- WIA Title 1 Programs (Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth)
- W-2 Program
- TAA Program
- Food Stamp Employment & Training Program
- Wisconsin Technical College System
- Division of Vocation Rehabilitation
- Adult Literacy Programs
- Programs offering service under Title V of the Older Americans Act
- Numerous local and regional Community-Based Organizations

V. Service Delivery Through the Job Center Network

The WPRS program is delivered through Wisconsin's Job Center Network. In PY04, Wisconsin will have WPRS available in 55 Job Centers (including at least two locations in each Workforce Development Area, and in some cases as many as eight locations in the WDA).

UI Claimants who attend an orientation session register on the touchscreen JobNet System creating a Wagner-Peyser customer record in the Automated System Support For Employment and Training (ASSET) Case Management System. Claimants receive a tour of their local One-Stop Job Center as a part of the orientation. Staff provides information on the various partner programs available within the Job Center network, as well as off-site partner programs and services for which the claimants may be eligible. In addition to receiving information about workshops and seminars available within their One-Stop, claimants receive information about and referral to WIA Title 1 Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation programs, Trade Act Programs, TANF programs, and the Wisconsin Technical College System. Claimants begin their job search in the One-Stop Resource Room at the time of orientation.

VI. Outcomes And Measurement

- A. Maintain a high number of UI claimants referred to PY04 WPRS Orientation, based on available funds and staffing allocations, as compared with PY03.
 - Measure – ETA 9002, UI Report – 9049; (See Note and Chart in Section VII);
- B. Maintain the high UI Trust Fund Savings (savings that result from shortened UI benefit claim duration for WPRS participants.)
 - Measure—State UI Savings Quarterly Report; (See Note and Chart in Section VII);
- C. Reduce the number of claimants that reach exhaustion of benefits.
 - Measure—UI Report – 9049;
- D. Increase number of UI Claimants referred to, and completing, services.
 - Measure—UI Report—9049.

VII. Program Performance Outcomes Anticipated

- A. Maintain a high number of UI claimants referred to PY04 WPRS Orientation, based on available funds and staffing allocations, as compared with PY03.
- B. Maintain the high UI Trust Fund savings. (Savings that result from shortened UI benefit claim duration for WPRS participants.)

Note – Even with the slightly reduced funding allocation and the impact of our inability to refill vacant positions, the PY03 WPRS program surpassed PY02 performance in both the number of claimants referred for service, and in savings to the UI Trust Fund.

Program Year	# Profiled	Pool Queue	% of Pool Profiled	UI Benefit Cost Savings
PY01	13,374	90,704	14.7%	\$21,181,392
PY02	20,042	97,852	20.5%	\$23,919,883
PY03	20,919	107,959	19.4%	\$24,027,867

- C. Reduce the number of claimants that reach exhaustion of benefits by 3%.
- D. Increase the percentage of UI Claimants referred to and completing services.

Program plan strategies and performance outcomes have been established to demonstrate that RES funds are used where they were most needed to contribute significantly to positive outcomes for UI claimants identified for reemployment services.