

UI REEMPLOYMENT SERVICES PLAN PROGRAM YEAR 2004

Executive Summary

Although the Illinois economy has shown slight improvement over the last year, the Illinois Department of Employment Security continues to face ongoing challenges in providing assistance to UI Claimants seeking reemployment. The June 2004 Unemployment Rate of 5.9% was an improvement over the June 2003 rate of 6.3%. Initial claims for the first six months of the calendar year have dropped 9.8% when compared to the same period last year. However the need for reemployment services to claimants remains high as the number of UI Claimants registered with the Employment Service saw a slight increase from the previous year. UI Reemployment Services funds will continue to be needed to enable front-line staff to provide the intensive placement and reemployment services frequently needed to connect individuals with suitable employment. The UI Reemployment Services funds are the critical resource for providing the staff intensive services needed by so many claimants.

IDES plans to carry over funds not expended in Program Year 2003 into Program Year 2004. With the PY 2004 allocation, IDES can continue to allocate seventeen full time equivalent positions to selected Illinois Employment and Training Centers (IETCs) around the state. This continues the policy since PY 2002 of funding full time positions to selected offices rather than portions of positions to all offices. The Department found that although the allocation to all offices provided maximum coverage around the state, it had a detrimental effect on the quality of services provided. The policy of allocating full time positions to fewer offices allows staff to turn their complete attention to the reemployment effort.

IDES will continue to offer claimants the array of services provided in past years. They will be registered for job finding workshops and matched against jobs in Illinois Skills Match. The IETCs' Resource Room materials and information systems will be available to them, and, when appropriate, they will be referred to the IETC partners for more specialized supportive or training services. The Department will continue to maintain its linkages with the IETC partners, especially the UI, TAA and WIA Title I entities, and with organizations outside of the IETC network in order to avoid duplication of services and to provide the full range of services that may be needed for a successful workforce reentry.

IDES is in the process of initiating a project to review the services to claimants in a comprehensive approach rather than developing services program by program. Illinois is participating in the National Claimant Placement and Claimant Reemployment (CPCR) Project. Illinois has also submitted a proposal for the Reemployment and Eligibility Assessment (REA) grant. By having the CPCR project, the REA grant, if approved, reviewing the Reemployment Services and Profiling programs, IDES will be able to determine what is needed to provide quality services to more UI Claimants for their reentry into employment.

IDES' plan outlines its proposed use of UI Reemployment Services funds for PY 2004 to provide

quality services to UI claimants above and beyond the basic services they might otherwise receive in the IETCs and to facilitate their prompt return to employment.

Background

The Illinois economy continued to show signs of strengthening in the last half of PY 2003. In June 2004, the number of employed in the state's labor force was 5,991,800 and the Unemployment Rate was at 5.9%. The improvement in the UI rate helped narrow the difference between the Illinois rate and the national UI Rate of 5.6%. Regular Initial UI claims filed in PY 2003 totaled 814,111 which represented a drop of 4.5% from PY 2002 (852,480). Weeks Paid also saw a decline to a level of 8,221,797 which is a decrease of 5.3%. But the demand for reemployment services is still growing as the number of claimants registered with the Employment Service increased by 4.5% in PY 2003. In order for IDES to provide the assistance needed, a continuation of UI Reemployment Services funding is needed to make available the staff time required to provide direct services that address the individual needs of the state's claimant base.

The funding pattern established in PY 2002 will continue in PY 2004. Seventeen positions will be funded in Illinois and will be allocated to seventeen offices. By allocating full time positions to a number of offices rather than allocating portions of positions throughout the state, leads to a higher quality of service to claimants. Full time positions allow for staff to spend more time contacting claimants, reviewing claimants' service needs, developing better coordination of services with One-Stop partners, and delivering more services that are needed in order to become reemployed quicker. IDES regional managers determine which of their offices would receive these positions based on local labor market conditions, staff and partner resources, and past program performance.

Services provided range from IETC orientation, job search workshops and job clubs, labor market information, referral to employment, and referral to supportive services, among others. Emphasis is placed on registration in Illinois Skills Match in order for claimants to be matched against jobs in the system. Staff work with claimants to make sure they have all their skills listed in ISM and their work histories are complete. Resume preparation is also emphasized in many offices as employers are relying more on the use of resumes than in the past. IDES staff also coordinate with their IETC partners in order to provide the needed services while avoiding duplication of efforts. In order to track services special "identifiers" have been installed in ISM so reports can be generated as to the level of services provided through the program. The "identifiers" also allow for tracking outcomes such as entered employment rates.

High levels of service continue for the program. In Program Year 2003 the number of claimants who received reemployment services totaled 11,800 and of those 4,308 were referred to employment, 2,308 participated in job search workshops or job clubs, and 464 were provided job development contacts. Many of the claimants were referred to partners in the One-Stop for additional services such as training and other intensive services.

Tracking of claimants for outcomes will continue in PY 2004. Through an agreement with

Northern Illinois University, claimants who receive reemployment services are tracked to determine how many enter employment following reemployment services. Due to the delay in tracking these outcomes through wage records, the latest data available is for PY 2002. The entered employment rate for claimants who received reemployment services was 56.4% which compares favorably to the 48% for the general population who registered with the Employment Service.

Program Design

IDES will use PY 2003 carry over funds plus the funding made available for PY 2004 to maintain the targeted service delivery through seventeen full time Reemployment Services position equivalents. Regional managers will continue to determine the IETCs where positions will be assigned, based on local labor market conditions, the availability of IDES staff and partner resources and past performance. It is anticipated that there will very few changes in where positions will be allocated.

Staff will tailor services to the needs of individual clients and coordinate the delivery of services with their IETC partners and community-based organizations outside the IETC network. In general, IDES staff will provide basic labor exchange services such as job development, referral to jobs and specific labor market information, but many with the requisite expertise will lead job search workshops and clubs and assist in resume preparation as well. More emphasis will be placed on developing quality registrations in Illinois Skills Match, making sure all the claimants skills are listed, individual work histories are complete, and other matching criteria are identified. Reemployment Services funding offers staff the advantage of time to provide in-depth services, ensure the completeness of claimants' ES registrations, orienting them to the materials and systems available in the IETC Resource room.

Program Linkages

In PY 2004, IDES will build on the good working relationships it has established with other service providers within and outside the IETC. IDES staff will continue to forge program linkages with their IETC partners, expanding on services and the levels of service already in place within the IETCs. In some areas, linkages with other organizations outside the IETC framework will be established to further expand the types of services available to claimants. IDES' strong relationships with other organizations will avoid duplication of effort and maximize the range of reemployment services available to claimants.

Delivery of Service

Delivery of service will remain similar in PY 2004. Claimants will be contacted about reemployment services using several approaches. When claimants file an initial claim at an IETC, they will be told about reemployment services and given detailed information in person. Lists of newly registered claimants from the UI Profiling system will be generated to each office to identify claimants who can benefit most from reemployment services. The Phone Notification System (PNS) may be used in some offices to contact claimants about scheduled job clubs or job search workshops. Working from a database of keyed-in phone numbers, PNS automatically

telephones claimants and delivers a pre-recorded message. PNS allows for widespread coverage of the claimant population and is an efficient way to send out information. Whatever the contact method, staff will attempt to engage claimants in program participation soon after they become unemployed and have filed a claim in order to facilitate a prompt return to work.

Most reemployment services will be provided through the IETCs, but IDES has the flexibility to arrange services at other locations. For mass layoffs or plant closings, IDES can provide reemployment services in union halls or on employers' premises.

Services will be provided to claimants by IDES and partner staff and employees of external organizations, depending on the type of service required. IDES staff will provide basic labor exchange services, such as job search activities, vocational guidance, job search workshops, and clubs, specific labor market information, etc. Where supportive services or training are required, referrals will be made to IETC partners or other organizations. Coordination of services will provide the necessary service mix to help claimants get back to work quickly.

Performance Outcomes

IDES will establish the following goals for PY 2004.

- The Entered Employment Rate for claimants who receive Reemployment Services will be 55%.
- The Employment Retention Rate for claimants who receive Reemployment Services will be 78%.