

REEMPLOYMENT SERVICES PERFORMANCE REPORT
PROGRAM YEAR 2004

STATE: ILLINOIS

Date: September 30, 2005

Summary

The Illinois Department of Employment Security's PY 2004 Reemployment Services Program served nearly 15,000 claimants throughout the state. Services were provided chiefly at the seventeen offices that shared in the PY 2004 funding, although several "unfunded" offices contributed to the program's year end results. For the most part, IDES Regional Managers have kept their funded positions in the same offices, taking advantage of the staff expertise and partner relationships that have been built over time.

Allocation Method

Illinois continued to allocate full time positions to selected offices to provide Reemployment Services. Prior to PY 2002, the Department had allocated fractional positions – a tenth to a quarter – so all offices had an opportunity to participate in the program. Management soon found that approach ineffective, as only minimal service could be delivered and funded staff were often diverted to more immediate needs. The Department has allocated full time positions to selected offices ever since to develop programs able to provide comprehensive, quality services, keep staff focused on the reemployment of claimants, and build working relationships with One-Stop partners and community based organizations. The offices chosen to receive these positions are most often those located in areas of higher unemployment.

Types of Services

The Department does not prescribe a single service delivery format for offices to follow, leaving them free to develop their own mix that most effectively serves their communities. Typically, IDES staff provide basic labor exchange services such as referral to jobs, specific labor market information, and job development contacts, but a number of them have recently reported that these must be prefaced with a complete job registration. Frequently, job seekers have difficulty recognizing and adequately describing their skills and work experiences that potential employers are likely to value most. IDES staff in offices such as North Aurora, Rockford, and Cicero, now coach claimants to ensure that the profile they

Stellar Service

Paula lost her job as an accountant after more than ten years and was understandably concerned about looking for work again after all that time. When she filed her claim for unemployment insurance, Bruce, IDES' Reemployment Services Coordinator in Elgin, introduced her to the services available through the One-Stop, particularly Illinois Skills Match, the Career Resource Center, workshops and the job club.

With this encouragement, Paula threw herself into her work search. Bruce and the WIA partner helped her tailor an effective resume. Paula took advantage of the "Job Seeker Skills" workshop and visited the Resource Center two to three times a week. Bruce made sure her registration in ISM was complete with all her marketable skills and, as a result of a few job development calls, he arranged interviews for her at local companies.

Within 5½ weeks of filing her unemployment claim, Paula was employed again – this time as a credit coordinator, earning more money than she had at her previous job.

register in Illinois Skills Match (ISM), IDES' Internet-based match system, includes the information necessary to maximize their opportunities for good matches. Many claimants' work searches have been enhanced because of attention to this one detail.

More intensive services, such as job search and/or interviewing skills workshops and resume preparation, are also provided, either by IDES staff alone or in collaboration with One-Stop partners. Often, IDES staff call upon their partners to provide vocational evaluation, skills-based training and supportive services, if indicated. Veterans have the added advantage of access to the full array of services available through their local veterans employment representatives or disabled veterans outreach personnel.

IDES Reemployment Services staff are often dispensers of information as well as service deliverers. Some, such as those at Grayslake and Jacksonville have assembled informational packets that are given to claimants at their initial visit or designed seminars that communicate IDES and partner services, Internet job search resources, schedules of upcoming workshops and recruitments, job interviewing tips, state and federal job applications and the like.

Selection of Claimants and Provision of Services

Offices use a variety of methods to contact claimants for services. Some make presentations during group claims taking, while others provide a separate orientation to the One-Stop and reemployment services to all claimants. The UI Profiling list is another useful means of identifying claimants. All offices try to contact and provide initial services to claimants early in the claim series to shorten the period of unemployment as much as possible.

Workshops are Winners

"I feel that everyone – even kids in school – should know about the interview, application, job skills, resume, etc. The class was great." – Lora, Jacksonville

"The best service I received was attending the Reemployment Workshop. I was not aware how useful a tool ISM can be. Erik explained how to really make it work for me. I appreciate the staff because they showed me they really care." – Carrie, Jacksonville

*"Presentation was excellent. Gave me quite a few things to think about as far as my job hunting skills."
"Excellent info – thankful for all the great people here that show us how to be successful if we want to. Keep doing what you are doing. – Satisfied Customers in Rockford*

Intake

North Aurora screens candidates for reemployment services from the office's pool of claimants. A week before they certify for benefits, the office contacts these claimants to introduce them to the Reemployment Services program and to invite them to meet with a representative. When claimants report, they receive a general assessment that includes an ISM registration, if needed, or a review of their existing one. A resume review and selection of a format best suited to the individual is conducted, followed by job search assistance, which includes techniques for accessing opportunities, labor market information, and supportive services, if necessary.

The Cicero Office checks the names on the UI Profiling list with those in ISM. The names of claimants whose registrations are complete are forwarded to partner staff at Daley Workforce Center where they are scheduled for orientation. Non-registered claimants are called into the Cicero Office for assistance in completing their ISM registrations.

Staff determine the services appropriate to each claimant's needs and the eligibility criteria for employability programs and assist in developing a plan of action to return to work. Direct contact with claimants emphasizes that the One-Stop facilities are not just "unemployment" offices, but have become "employment" centers that can help them to not only find employment, but can assist them to change careers if necessary.

Partners

With few exceptions, partners play an important role in service delivery at IDES' Reemployment Services Program sites. In addition to sharing information about their services at orientation sessions, partners contribute most significantly in the delivery of intensive employability services. Claimants who need help developing a resume and cover letter, planning a job search, or overcoming barriers to employment through supportive services or training will often be assisted by partner as well as IDES staff. Regardless of the degree to which staff have been able to seamlessly integrate service delivery, many feel that a better understanding of each other's program requirements and services improves the quality of service claimants receive.

Performance

In Program Year 2004, 14,868 individuals received reemployment services, a 26 percent increase over the previous year. Of those, 6,268, or 42 percent, were referred to employment, 2,187 (15 percent) participated in job search workshops or job clubs, and 490 (3 percent) were provided job development contacts. Claimants were also referred to partners in the One-Stop for additional services such as training and other intensive services.

IDES works with Northern Illinois University and its data warehouse to track the employment and retention rates of claimants who receive services. Because rate calculation relies on the use of wage records and due to the definition of the performance measures in effect for PY 2004, the Department must reach back a year and more for data used in the calculation. Therefore, PY 2004 data is not available at this time; but PY 2003 and PY 2002 data have been produced for entered employment and retention rates respectively.

IDES established the following goals for its PY 2004 Reemployment Services Program and surpassed them both, as follows:

- ▶ The Entered Employment Rate for claimants who receive Reemployment Services:
 - Goal: 55 percent
 - Actual Performance: 59.7 percent.
 - Performance for total job seekers registered with the Employment Service: 42 percent.

Placement Services

In Danville, job seekers are invited to Quarterly Employer Panels where five employers, each from a different sector, give a brief presentation about their company and specific hiring information. Job seekers have an opportunity to ask questions and gain valuable insights into employer requirements.

Moline and Peoria make employer visits on behalf of their reemployment job seekers.

Chicago's Mid-South IDES staff and their partners held a career fair that attracted 26 employers and 800 job seekers.

- ▶ The Employment Retention Rate for claimants who receive Reemployment Services:
 - Goal: 78 percent
 - Actual Performance: 80.3 percent.
 - Performance for total job seekers registered with the Employment Service: 84 percent.

PY 2005

Illinois will continue to provide services to UI claimants through the Reemployment Services Program in PY 2005. At this point it does not appear that major changes will be made to the delivery of services. However some positions may be reassigned to different offices if unemployment patterns within the state shift markedly.

The Department is currently involved in a multi-year project to redesign its unemployment insurance benefits system. A new feature of the system, planned for implementation later in 2005, will automatically transfer key data entered during the claims taking process to Illinois Skills Match, creating a shell registration. Claimants will be required to enter additional information to complete it within a given period of time. Because the system redesign project will be implemented in stages, claimants who file their claims via the Internet will be automatically registered during this year's launch and claimants who file in the local office or through any other means the Department decides to employ, will become automatic registrants by mid-2006. Quicker entry into Illinois Skills Match will improve claimants opportunities for earlier reemployment or for earlier identification and amelioration of obstacles to reemployment.