



September 29, 2006

Mr. Byron Zuidema
Regional Administrator
Employment and Training Administration
U. S. Department of Labor
230 South Dearborn, 6th Floor
Chicago, Illinois 60604

Re: PY 2005 Reemployment Services Performance Report

Dear Mr. Zuidema:

The Illinois Department of Employment Security's Reemployment Services Performance Report for Program Year 2005 is enclosed for your review. The report describes the delivery of reemployment services to claimants through Illinois Employment and Training Centers across the state. The IDES staff dedicated to this program provide quality services to claimants that are tailored to their needs and have helped many to return to work. They have continually improved the effectiveness of their service delivery and the resulting outcomes.

If you have any questions concerning this report, please contact Jo-Anne Vogt at 312-793-7805 or JoAnne.Vogt@illinois.gov.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Brenda', is written in black ink.

Enclosure

Rod R. Blagojevich, Governor
Brenda A. Russell, Director

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REEMPLOYMENT SERVICES PERFORMANCE REPORT PROGRAM YEAR 2005

STATE: ILLINOIS

DATE: September 30, 2005

Summary

The Illinois Department of Employment Security's PY 2005 Reemployment Services Program served nearly 15,000 claimants throughout the state. Services were provided chiefly at the seventeen offices that shared in the PY 2005 funding, although several unfunded offices contributed to the program's year end results. Performance surpassed the goals established for the entered employment and employment retention rates.

Allocation Method

With the funding level remaining constant, Illinois again allocated seventeen full time Reemployment Services positions to selected offices throughout the state. All of them were funded in the previous year, ensuring continuity of the staff expertise and partner relationships that have been built over time. For the most part, the offices chosen to receive these positions are located in areas of higher unemployment.

At one time, the Department experimented with allocating fractional positions – from a tenth to a quarter – to every office, so all had an opportunity to participate in the program. Management soon found that approach ineffective, as low funding at the local level permitted delivery of only minimal services by “part-time” staff who apportioned their time among multiple programs. On the other hand, full time assignment to reemployment services allowed staff to keep their focus on the claimants’ employment needs and goals, design and deliver optimal services, and build working relationships with their IETC (Illinois Employment and Training Center or One-Stop) partners and community based organizations.

Types of Services

Illinois’ diversity precludes the implementation of a single statewide service delivery method, so the Department has left its offices free to customize their programs, including reemployment services, to the needs of their communities. Typically, claimants receive basic labor exchange services from IDES staff, such as registration in Illinois Skills Match (ISM), the Department’s job match system; referral to jobs; labor market information; and job development contacts.

A New Career

A single parent of three, Karina was devastated when she lost her job as a cashier at a major grocery chain in September. She met Bruce, Elgin's reemployment specialist, when she first filed for UI. She had not had to look for work for 15 years, so she eagerly absorbed information about IDES and partner resources and how to access them.

Karina knew she did not want to return to cashiering. She had taken some accounting courses in college, and decided on an accounting, administrative, or clerical track. Bruce's referral to the WIA partner resulted in her enrollment in a Microsoft Applications class and she attended several workshops to hone her job search skills.

By November, she took a temporary clerical job to test her skills and to decide if she was on the right career path. She loved it. Bruce's job development calls led to several interviews for permanent positions. In February, Karina began her new job with Kane County and is in line for a promotion that will significantly increase her responsibilities and pay.

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.

Entering a comprehensive registration in ISM is critical to obtaining successful job matches. As part of the multi-year redevelopment of its UI benefits system, IDES began in March 2006 to automatically register in ISM claimants who filed their claims on the Internet. Key data entered during the Internet claims filing process is transferred to a shell registration in the job match system. The claimant is required to complete the registration with their skills. From Marion and Alton in southern Illinois to Moline in the north, reemployment specialists report helping claimants – individually or in groups – to identify and record the skills they have used on the job or learned in training to maximize their clients’ opportunities to connect with potential employers.

IDES and partner staff also provide informational seminars and job search workshops. Informational seminars orient claimants to IDES and partner services, e.g., job listings through ISM and other Internet websites; vocational evaluation, skills-based training, and supportive services, if indicated; and schedules of upcoming workshops and employer recruitments. Whether conducted by

IDES or a community college, job search workshops provide more intensive assistance in career choice or change, job search resources, resume writing and interviewing skills. On occasion, some offices invite employers to brief workshop participants on their job openings and to meet

“I learned info on ISM...and what the employers are wanting and what they expect...I like having a refresher on what is expected of me and to make sure I am doing things correctly.”

- Susan, Jacksonville

Workshop Graduates
Claimants receive college credit for attending reemployment classes at a Downstate community college. Bob, Marion’s reemployment specialist, conducts the classes in 3 sessions which include ISM and other Internet job search systems, resume writing, job applications, and interviewing. Attendance is excellent.

with them after the workshop. The seminars and workshops generate a great deal of positive feedback from claimants who often credit the information and techniques they learned for their return to work.

Selection of Claimants and Provision of Services

Offices use a variety of methods to contact claimants for services. The Marion office’s specialist participates in all local Rapid Response meetings so claimants become familiar with him and the assistance he can provide. Some make presentations during group claims taking, while others provide a separate orientation to the IETC and reemployment services for 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.

Staff determine the services appropriate to each claimant’s needs and the eligibility criteria for employability programs. They then assist in developing a plan of action to return to work. Direct contact with claimants emphasizes that the IETCs are not just “unemployment” offices, but have

- Grayslake’s Orientation Package**
(provided at initial interview)
- IETC services
 - Schedules of workshops, onsite recruitments, resume reviews
 - Top Ten ways to find a job
 - Resources and websites employers use to fill job openings
 - Listing of job search websites
 - Current state and county jobs

become providers of comprehensive services designed to facilitate reentry into the workforce.

Partners

IDES' IETC partners include the local Workforce Investment Areas, the Department of Human Services and its Division of Rehabilitation Services, and community colleges, among others. 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 through workshops and individual assistance. Claimants who need additional 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 IDES and partner staff have been able to integrate service delivery, many of these colleagues feel that a better understanding of each other's program requirements and services improves the quality of service claimants receive.

Performance

In Program Year 2005, 14,884 individuals participated in reemployment services, slightly more than the previous year's total. Of those, 6,732 or 45.2 percent were referred to employment, 2,311 (15.5 percent) participated in job search workshops or job clubs, and job development contacts were made on behalf of 458 (3.1 percent). Claimants were also referred to partners in the One-Stop for additional services such as training and other intensive services.

Partnership at Work
In Alton, IDES and its partners take workshop attendees on a tour of the IETC after the session, leaving time for one-on-one meetings according to each claimant's service needs. In Jacksonville, staff answer post-workshop questions in the Resource Center.
In addition to conducting Reemployment classes at the local community college, Marion's specialist and partners staff the Maytag Transition Center, helping soon-to-be displaced workers cope with impending job loss and refocus their energies on planning their future careers.
North Aurora's relationship with its partners does not stop at referral. They continue to follow up with claimants who have additional needs to ensure a successful outcome.
In monthly meeting, Peoria and its partners resolve problems, introduce new methods and procedures, and locate specific services that individual claimants require.

A claimant referred by the Marion office to a security company was hired as a guard at a new coal mine. He was quickly promoted to supervisor, and within 4 months he called the office to post his own job order.
Terrell, a recently discharged Iraqi Freedom veteran, accepted a \$50,000 a year job as an overnight assistant manager with a trucking company after attending the Harvey office's workshops.
A claimant called Rockford's specialist to thank him for suggesting networking as a job search technique. He was reemployed within 10 days.

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, the Department must reach back a year and more for data used in the calculation. PY 2005 data are not available at this time, so entered employment and retention rates are based on PY 2004 and PY 2003 data respectively.

IDES retained its PY 2004 Reemployment Services goals for the PY 2005 Program and surpassed both goals, as follows:

- The Entered Employment Rate:
 - Goal: 55 percent
 - Reemployment Services Performance: 64 percent
 - Employment Service Performance (All Registrants): 65 percent

- The Employment Retention Rate:
 - Goal: 78 percent
 - Reemployment Services Performance: 82 percent
 - Employment Service Performance (All Registrants): 81 percent

Program Year 2006

In Fiscal Year 2007, the Employment and Training Administration will implement a new Core Measure: Facilitate the reemployment of claimants within the quarter following their first UI payment. The criterion, the percentage of claimants reemployed within this period, may be established by September 30, 2006. IDES' participation in the Reemployment Services Program for the past several years, and now in the Reemployment Eligibility and Assessment Grant program, has enabled front-line staff in funded offices to develop expertise in the delivery of

Best Practices

Jacksonville's introductory Reemployment workshop is recognized in the Central Region as an example of best practices in reemployment services. The weekly workshop presents such topics as an introduction to the IETC and its services; a UI review; tips on job applications, resumes, interviewing, and keeping a job; partner information; and ISM. Sometimes, employers with an immediate need to fill job vacancies speak to the group and conduct interviews after the workshop. When the session is over, participants are given time to update their ISM profiles and meet with IETC staff. The office has developed a spreadsheet of workshop attendees to track claimants, identify trends or problems and follow up on participants' progress. Jacksonville has shared workshop information and materials with several offices in the region.

services needed to reconnect individuals with suitable employment and to build cooperative links with their IETC partners. The Department will share experiences, methodologies, materials, and best practices with offices not so closely involved in the Reemployment Services program to ensure a consistently effective level of service delivery throughout the state.

In addition, with the continued redesign of its UI benefits system, IDES will expand automatic registration in ISM. At this time, only claimants who file Internet claims are automatically registered in ISM; but, with the system's completion, all claimants will be automatically registered, regardless of how or

where they filed. Quicker entry into ISM will improve claimants' opportunities for earlier reemployment or for earlier identification and elimination of obstacles to reemployment.