

# REEMPLOYMENT SERVICE AND ELIGIBILITY ASSESSMENTS (RESEA) GRANTS

*Facilitating Reemployment and Increasing Program Integrity*

## BACKGROUND

The Unemployment Insurance (UI) program is a required partner in the broader public workforce system and provides unemployment benefits to individuals who have lost their employment through no fault of their own and who otherwise meet initial and continuing UI eligibility requirements. Beginning in 2005, the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration funded the voluntary UI Reemployment and Eligibility Assessment (REA) program to address individual reemployment needs of UI claimants, as well as prevent and detect improper benefit payments. In 2015, the Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) program replaced the REA program providing greater access to reemployment services in addition to services previously provided under the REA program.

In Fiscal Year (FY) 2018, amendments to the Social Security Act permanently authorized the RESEA program and implemented several significant changes including formula-based funding and a series of requirements intended to increase the use and availability of evidence-based reemployment interventions and strategies. The permanent RESEA program has four purposes:

1. Reduce UI duration through improved employment outcomes,
2. Strengthen UI program integrity,
3. Promote alignment with the vision of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), and
4. Establish RESEA as an entry point to other workforce system partners.

## TARGET POPULATIONS

Historically, RESEA targeted two populations: UI claimants determined to be most likely to exhaust benefits and former U.S. military servicemembers receiving Unemployment Compensation for Ex-service Member (UCX) benefits. The recent permanent RESEA authorization continues to target services to UI claimants identified as likely to exhaust UI benefits. However, provisions within DOL's annual appropriations have provided additional flexibility for states to target any recipients of regular UI or UCX. Once selected, a claimant's participation in RESEA is mandatory and failure to complete services may affect the claimant's UI benefits. During FY 2018 approximately 20 percent of all UI claimants received RESEA services.

## RESEA AVAILABILITY

State participation in RESEA is voluntary. To operate an RESEA program a state must submit an annual plan detailing its service-delivery strategies, projected number of participants served, and other essential information. During FY 2019, 47 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands operated RESEA programs.

## SERVICES PROVIDED

The foundational element of the RESEA program is an in-person meeting between the claimant and an appropriately trained American Job Center (AJC) staff member. There is variation across states in the use of technology, group sessions, and the number of RESEAs provided. At a minimum, RESEA sessions must include:

- ▶ Eligibility Assessment
  - › Every RESEA session is required to include a one-on-one assessment of the claimants' continuing UI eligibility. This assessment typically includes confirming employment status and a review of the claimant's work search activities.
- ▶ **Reemployment Services.** At a minimum, RESEAs must provide participants with:
  - › Support in the development of an individual reemployment plan,
  - › Customized career and labor market information,
  - › Enrollment in the Wagner-Peyser Employment Service, and
  - › Information and access to other AJC services and resources that support the claimant's return to work.

## EVIDENCE-BASED STRATEGIES

The RESEA program is based on a successful model established in Nevada where eligibility assessments were delivered seamlessly with reemployment services. Research on that service delivery model found the impact to be the following:

- ▶ Claimants were significantly less likely to exhaust their benefits,
- ▶ Claimants had significantly shorter UI durations and lower total benefits paid (on average 1.82 fewer weeks and \$536 lower total benefits paid),
- ▶ Claimants were more successful in returning to work sooner, earning higher wages in the measurement period, and retaining their jobs, and
- ▶ Every \$1.00 of cost produced \$2.60 of savings.

States are required to implement RESEA interventions and service delivery strategies that have strong evidence to support they work and to evaluate any strategies without such evidence. Beginning in FY 2019, states have the flexibility to use up to 10 percent of their annual RESEA funding to conduct evaluations of these interventions and strategies. Beginning in FY 2023 states will be required to use no less than 25 percent of their grant funds for interventions or service delivery strategies with strong causal evidence showing a demonstrated capacity to improve employment and earnings outcomes for program participants.

## LEGAL AUTHORITY

On February 9, 2018, the President signed the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018, [Public Law 115-123](#) (BBA), which included amendments to the Social Security Act (SSA) that created a permanent authorization for the RESEA program. The RESEA provisions are contained in Section 30206 of the BBA, enacting new Section 306 of the SSA.