



## Proactively Tackling Long-Term Unemployment

### Reemployment Strategies That Work

Long-term unemployment is a reality for many Americans. After years of a high number of UI claimants exhausting benefits, 2013 may be the last year in this recession of federal emergency benefits. It's a critical time to find solutions for our long-term unemployed before benefits are curtailed.

Fortunately, the US recession spawned a renewed focus on unemployment insurance (UI) claimant reemployment. Leveraging USDOL and other funding, a number of states have been investing more deeply in claimant reemployment and yielding strong results. And research suggests that their timely and meaningful job search assistance lowers claimant duration and increases claimant employment income. Following are brief summaries of example reemployment initiatives, proving successful.

#### Reemployment and Eligibility Assessments (REA) Grants

Forty-two states currently have REA grants from USDOL. They combine in-person reviews of UI eligibility and labor market information, development of individual reemployment plans and referral to reemployment services (RES) and/or training.

Research conducted by IMPAQ International determined that REA program was effective in achieving its goals of reducing duration *and* generating savings.<sup>1</sup> It further found that Nevada's program was more effective in helping claimants and reducing costs than other states reviewed. In most states, staff members delivering initial REA services did not deliver the reemployment services (RES). However, in Nevada, the same staff members deliver all of the services in a single interview, which appears to be a factor in its results - reducing claims by 2.96 weeks, saving an average of \$873. DOL now requires REA programs to refer to RES.

#### Beyond the "Work Test"

Many states have identified that initial job services for UI claimants need to be more than just a referral to employment services and a work test (ensuring claimants are able, available and actively seeking and accepting suitable work). Indeed, research shows that providing quality job search assistance earlier lowers claim duration and exhaustion.

One example is Georgia, which had a 9.4% unemployment rate and the second lowest duration in the country at 13.4 weeks. It requires all UI claimants to report in-person to their Career Centers, at the fifth, ninth and fourteenth week of their claim, for job search assessment and assistance. South Carolina had a 9.6% unemployment rate and the fifth lowest duration rate in the country at 14.0 weeks. The state provides claimants with the additional services of a job placement interview, training in reviewing job openings and/or a job-search workshop when claimants register with Employment Services immediately after receiving their first benefit check.

Utah requires claimants, at claim filing, to complete a 24-question online evaluation. Dependent upon their responses, claimants are required to take from one to five online reemployment workshops within the following 14 days to continue their eligibility for benefits.

These examples reflect a growing trend that, during the first five weeks of an individual's claim, enhanced job search services such as resume writing, networking, job clubs, employer contacts and job search training can be impactful for claimant duration and UI trust funds. These experiments and research point to opportunity for states that are proactive in 2013 to avoid the claimant cliff of 2014.

---

<sup>1</sup> Impaq International, IMPACT OF THE REEMPLOYMENT AND ELIGIBILITY ASSESSMENT (REA) INITIATIVE, June 2011, Task Order No: DOLF091A21507, Eileen Poe-Yamagata, Jacob Benus, et. Al.