

# REPORT

FINAL REPORT

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## **Implementation of the EUC08 Reemployment Services and Reemployment Eligibility Assessments Program: Findings from Nine States**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Typically, unemployed workers who have met their state's eligibility criteria for benefits can receive up to 26 weeks of unemployment benefits, which are intended to provide a financial cushion while the workers adapt to the loss of a job and household income. These state-funded benefits, often referred to as regular Unemployment Insurance (UI), are available regardless of the strength of the economy. However, when the nation as a whole is in a recession or recovering from one, Congress often enacts legislation that makes Federally funded unemployment benefits available to long-term unemployed workers through a temporary emergency program. The Emergency Unemployment Compensation Act of 2008 and related legislation provided such benefits in response to the recession that began in December 2007. Depending on the level of the total unemployment rate in a given state, the EUC08 program included up to four separate and successive tiers (referred to as Tiers 1 through 4) of emergency unemployment benefits for people who exhausted their regular UI benefits. At the peak of the EUC08 program, such exhaustees in states with very high unemployment rates could receive up to 53 weeks of EUC08 benefits through all four tiers of EUC08 benefits. The EUC08 program began in June 2008 and ended in December 2013; during this period, more than \$230 billion in EUC08 benefits was paid to long-term unemployed workers.

The Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012 represented an important policy shift for the nation's workforce system, because for the first time it required that states provide Reemployment Services and Reemployment and Eligibility Assessments (RES/REAs) to particular EUC08 benefit claimants. The EUC08 RES/REA program established by the Act sought to promote (1) improved access to reemployment assistance services among EUC08 claimants, and (2) increased scrutiny of eligibility for benefits. The Act required that claimants who began collecting Tier 1 or who transitioned from Tier 1 to Tier 2 benefits on or after March 23, 2012, participate in the program, which included receiving (1) an orientation to an American Job Center (AJC) and the reemployment services and other resources made available through the center, (2) labor market and career information, (3) individual skills assessments, and (4) a review of their eligibility for EUC08 benefits based on their work search activities. Claimants who participated in the program when starting Tier 1 EUC08 benefits were not required to participate again when transitioning from Tier 1 to Tier 2 benefits. States also had discretion to waive the program participation requirement for claimants who had recently completed similar services or activities through other programs, or who had other allowable causes for nonparticipation (such as seeking work only through a union hiring hall). The program's scale was substantial—according to data reported by states to the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), between April 2012 and December 2013, more than 5 million claimants were scheduled for EUC08 RES/REA services, and more than 3 million received services, nationwide.<sup>1</sup>

This report presents findings from a study of the implementation of the EUC08 RES/REA program in nine purposively selected states. This study sought to identify strategies that the selected states used to successfully implement the program at scale and practices that federal, state, and local administrators could consider in the future for similar programs. The study

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<sup>1</sup> These estimates are based on calculations of data from the Employment and Training Administration 9128u reports about the EUC08 RES/REA program (Employment and Training Administration 2014). The data were provided by DOL to Mathematica during March 2014.

examined how the nine study states designed their programs; the strategies they used to foster participation in services and overcome challenges with program administration; and lessons learned. For the analysis, we relied primarily on qualitative information collected through discussions with state-level administrators and a subset of frontline staff at one AJC in each study state. At the state level, we typically conducted interviews with the UI program director, the EUC08 RES/REA program coordinator, and the state-level Wagner-Peyser (WP) program director. At the local office level, we typically interviewed UI and/or WP frontline staff who interacted directly with EUC08 RES/REA program claimants. Visits took place over one or two days in each of nine study states. Our study design also originally included analysis of state-specific reports that were to be used for program monitoring. One report focused on core metrics of the program, such as the numbers of claimants who were scheduled for program services or who completed them. The other pertained to the characteristics of claimants, the types of services they received, and their outcomes after they exited from the program. However, problems in the quality of the data limited our confidence in results based on them. Our analysis in the main chapters of the report therefore includes the state aggregate data but is restricted to numbers of EUC08 claimants who began Tier 1 or Tier 2 benefit receipt, who were scheduled for services, and who participated in the mandated services.

### **Study research topics**

The study was designed to generate answers to a large number of research questions. However, broadly speaking, the questions can be represented by two groups (Table ES.1). The first set pertains to states' program designs and implementation experiences and is based primarily on the in-depth discussions with state and frontline staff in the nine study states. The second set pertains to EUC08 claimants' waivers and participation rates. Analysis of state-level aggregate data reported to DOL helped answer questions about the second group of questions.

All the study research questions and analyses are descriptive. That is, we did not develop any causal models with which to estimate the effectiveness of the EUC08 RES/REA program on claimants' employment outcomes, because such modeling was beyond the scope of the current project. Hence, no causal conclusions about the effectiveness of the EUC08 RES/REA program should be drawn from the findings of this study.

### **Selection of study states**

DOL's priority for this study was to learn about the practices in states in which implementation of the EUC08 RES/REA program was perceived to have gone well. In collaboration with DOL, the study team selected study states to be diverse on a range of characteristics, such as size of the EUC08 RES/REA program, geographic location, and whether the state had a UI REA program—a program that is similar to the EUC08 RES/REA program but that provides services to claimants of regular UI benefits. Table ES.2 summarizes the characteristics that were taken into account in the selection of states for the study.

**Table ES.1. Study research questions**

Research questions
<b>States' program designs and implementation experiences</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>What strategies did states use to implement the mandated EUC08 RES/REAs service requirements?</b> How were claimants notified of their participation requirements? To whom were waivers granted?</li> <li>2. <b>How were UI and other state staff resources allocated to the program?</b> Which agencies and partners were involved in implementing the program? What staff resources were shared between the EUC08 RES/REA program and the existing UI REA program? To what extent were other resources available through AJCs utilized? What strategies did states use to foster communication across different agencies and partners? What processes were put in place to monitor service delivery and program performance?</li> <li>3. <b>Which components were delivered in person, and which were delivered online or remotely (for example, via phone or video conference)?</b> What was the typical sequence of services? What follow-up was conducted to ensure that claimants fulfilled the requirements? What additional services, beyond the four mandatory activities, were typically provided to claimants? What was the rationale for adding these services?</li> <li>4. <b>What were the perceived characteristics and needs of EUC08 RES/REA program claimants?</b> How did this compare to the characteristics and needs of other unemployment benefit claimants, such as Worker Profiling and Reemployment Services (WPRS) and UI REA claimants? How did claimants respond to the EUC08 RES/REA program? How well suited were mandatory EUC08 RES/REA activities to the characteristics and needs of these claimants?</li> <li>5. <b>What practices for serving the EUC08 claimants were viewed as successful?</b> What adjustments or changes were made to the EUC08 RES/REA program once it was implemented, and why? Which outreach strategies showed promise for encouraging participation in the program? How were states able to cope with the high volume of claimants? How did states integrate the UI REA and EUC08 RES/REA programs in delivering services? Were efficiencies created through sharing staff or use of common tools (for example, case management and client information systems) between the UI system and AJCs? What strategies were used to facilitate meeting Federal reporting requirements?</li> </ol>
<b>EUC08 RES/REA waiver and participation rates</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>How many EUC08 claimants potentially subject to the RES/REA program mandate received waivers from the participation requirement?</b></li> <li>2. <b>How many EUC08 claimants participated in RES/REAs?</b> How did participation rates vary across states and over time?</li> </ol>

**Table ES.2. Characteristics used for selection of the nine study states**

State	EUC08 RES/REA program characteristics				
	Average rate of participation	Scale of program <sup>a</sup>	Change in participation over time <sup>b</sup>	DOL region	UI REA program
Arkansas	High	Medium	Small change	4	No
Delaware	Low	Small	Small change	2	No
Georgia	High	Large	Large increase	3	No <sup>c</sup>
Massachusetts	High	Large	Large increase	1	Yes
Minnesota	High	Medium	Small change	5	Yes
Nebraska	High	Medium	Large increase	5	Yes
New Hampshire	High	Small	Large increase	1	Yes
Washington	High	Large	Small change	6	Yes
West Virginia	High	Medium	Small change	2	Yes

Source: Analysis of data from the DOL 9128u and 9128 reports.

Notes: The EUC08 RES/REA program participation information is based on data covering April 1, 2012, to March 31, 2013, which were used in the site selection process. UI REA = Unemployment Insurance Reemployment and Eligibility Assessments.

<sup>a</sup> State programs were categorized into being of large (more than 9,000), medium (2,000 to 9,000), or small (fewer than 2,000) scale on the basis of the average number of claimants served per quarter.

<sup>b</sup> The change in participation over time was used as a factor in the selection of study states to foster diversity across study states based on whether they were relatively fast or slow in rolling out implementation of the program (while achieving full-scale implementation eventually). Change was measured from the first quarter of program implementation (April 1, 2012, to June 30, 2012) to the six-month period of October 1, 2012, to March 31, 2013. A large increase was defined as one of 15 percentage points or more; a small change indicates a change of less than 15 percentage points in absolute value.

<sup>c</sup> Georgia started a UI REA program in October 2012.

## Starting, organizing, and staffing the EUC08 RES/REA program

DOL guidance encouraged states to build on existing services and procedures while also adapting them to meet the specific needs of the EUC08 claimants and requirements of the EUC08 RES/REA program. At the time the program was introduced, states typically had in place services and operational procedures—most notably for the WPRS program and the UI REA programs—that targeted regular UI program claimants who were at risk of being unemployed for a long time. However, the EUC08 RES/REA program was the first wide-scale application of these services and procedures to long-term unemployed claimants who had collected all of the regular program benefits to which they were entitled. From our site visit discussions, two important themes surfaced regarding how the study states designed and staffed their EUC08 RES/REA programs.

1. ***States relied heavily on existing procedures for related programs as they developed their EUC08 RES/REA programs.*** All study states assigned service delivery responsibility to staff from either the UI or WP agency, based on which had already been delivering similar services through other programs. In five of the nine study states, WP staff provided all four mandatory EUC08 RES/REA services; in one state, UI staff did so (Table ES.3). In the other three states, a combination of UI and WP staff provided the services. In essence, no state “reinvented the wheel.” Instead, all states took advantage of prior service delivery models, while making minor innovations to accommodate the unique features of the EUC08 RES/REA program. Although we heard of narrow issues in which states might have done things differently had more time been available for the rollout of the program, states—by and large—thought that it made sense to leverage their existing procedures because those procedures worked well.

**Table ES.3. Program staff assigned responsibility for mandatory EUC08 RES/REA services**

State	AJC orientation	Provision of labor market information	Skills assessment	In-person eligibility review
Arkansas	WP	UI or WP	UI or WP	UI
Delaware	WP	WP	WP	WP
Georgia	UI or WP	UI or WP	UI or WP	UI or WP
Massachusetts	WP	WP	WP	WP
Minnesota	UI	UI	UI	UI
Nebraska	WP	WP	WP	WP
New Hampshire	WP	WP	WP	WP
Washington	WP	WP	WP	WP
West Virginia	UI or WP	UI or WP	UI or WP	UI or WP

Source: Interviews with state-level WP and UI administrators conducted between November 2013 and March 2014.

Note: AJC = American Job Center; UI = Unemployment Insurance; WP = Wagner-Peyser.

2. ***Most states hired temporary staff to help with EUC08 RES/REA service delivery.*** The temporary staff helped to manage the increased workload for AJC staff either by providing EUC08 RES/REA services directly or by taking over selected responsibilities (such as handling incoming telephone calls) of regular UI or WP frontline staff and freeing them to

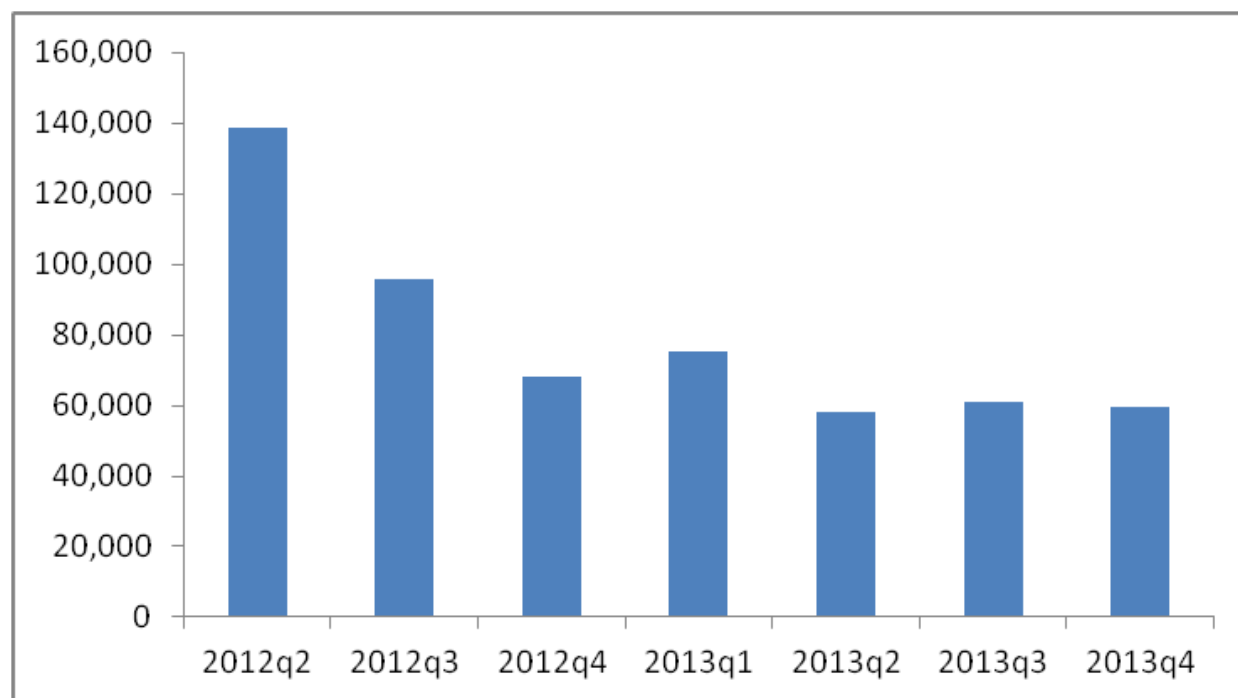
provide RES/REA services. State staff that adopted the latter approach felt that it allowed the state to take better advantage of the institutional knowledge of the regular staff.

### Engaging claimants in EUC08 RES/REA program services

When designing and implementing their EUC08 RES/REA programs, state administrators needed to develop and apply procedures to identify and engage those EUC08 claimants who were subject to program requirements. This meant determining which claimants should be mandated to receive program services and which should be exempt. For those who were not exempt, states devised scheduling, participation, and sanction policies to encourage them to complete their required activities and ensure that only those who were meeting their obligations were receiving EUC08 benefits. Five important findings emerged regarding how states identified, engaged, and tracked claimants for the program.

1. *The number of EUC08 claimants who could have been subject to the EUC08 RES/REA program participation requirement in study states was substantial.* We estimate from data reported by states to DOL that the eight study states for which data were available (all except Washington) had to exempt or call in about 556,000 claimants for EUC08 RES/REA program services. Because of a backlog of claimants to be served or exempted near the start of the program in early 2012, states' workloads were highest in the first two quarters of the program and then became lower over time (Figure ES.1).

**Figure ES.1. Estimated number of EUC08 claimants subject to the EUC08 RES/REA participation requirement, by quarter, across eight study states<sup>a</sup>**



Source: ETA 5159 data from April 2012 to December 2013.

<sup>a</sup> Data for Washington are excluded. See Chapter III for additional details about how these estimates were made.

2. ***State administrators and frontline staff uniformly valued the EUC08 RES/REA participation mandate, while also acknowledging that some claimants should be exempted.*** State and frontline staff alike perceived the mandatory RES/REA program activities as important tools to help long-term unemployed EUC08 claimants (1) reconnect with job search assistance resources, (2) learn more effective job search strategies, and (3) develop more realistic expectations for reemployment. At the same time, staff recognized that there were appropriate reasons for some EUC08 Tier 1 or Tier 2 claimants to be exempted. It was common for claimants who were job-attached or received job offers through a union hiring hall, as well as out-of-state claimants, to be exempted. We estimated that the exemption rates for study states ranged from less than 5 percent to more than 40 percent. Definitive data on which reasons were most important for exemptions was not consistently available from study states. However, one study state reported having a large number of out-of-state claimants who were exempted, and another study state's high exemption rate could be explained in part by its exempting of prior UI REA program participants.
3. ***Most study states prescheduled non-exempt claimants for their first EUC08 RES/REA service—typically the orientation—and made clear in their notification letters to claimants the importance of their participation.*** In their notification letters, states typically underscored that failure to participate in the required services, absent justifiable cause, could make claimants ineligible for benefits. While states gave claimants some flexibility to reschedule services, this flexibility was limited given the Federal law mandate that non-exempt claimants participate in services in a timely manner to receive EUC08 benefits.
4. ***Across all study states and over the duration of the program, participation rates were relatively high.*** Using state-reported data, we estimated that about 85 percent of claimants who were scheduled to receive EUC08 RES/REA services completed them. This finding is consistent with state and frontline staff's view that claimants were strongly motivated by the potential loss of EUC08 benefits to comply with the program mandate.
5. ***When claimants failed to participate, most study states issued either indefinite sanctions—a stop-payment order until the claimant complied with requirements— or an escalating combination of week-to-week and indefinite sanctions.*** Each of these approaches was used by four study states. Only one of the nine study states exclusively issued week-to-week sanctions for nonparticipation.
6. ***States were able to adapt their existing data systems to some extent to help with tracking and reporting for the EUC08 RES/REA program.*** However, doing so still required manual procedures in some states. This was especially the case for states that required claimants to visit an AJC more than once to complete their program requirements. (As mentioned above, our analysis of states' data reported to DOL found inconsistencies in the quality of the information available for program monitoring purposes.)

### **Delivering EUC08 RES/REA program services**

As state administrators adapted existing program models to EUC08 RES/REA program's goals, they had to take into account factors such as the large number of claimants to be served, the space available in AJCs to provide services, the temporary nature of the program, and limited

staffing and fiscal resources. Key findings and implications regarding how study states designed and delivered services included the following:

1. ***Study states relied mostly on in-person introduction to and provision of EUC08 RES/REA services.*** The legislation that established the program required that states review claimants' eligibility for benefits in person (with a few exceptions allowed), but gave states the option to conduct the other required program activities either in-person or remotely (such as over the telephone or electronically). Despite this flexibility, administrators and frontline staff in the nine study states preferred in-person introduction to and delivery of services, which they thought engaged claimants more extensively with the workforce system. At the same time, administrators were mindful of resource constraints and aimed to minimize undue burdens for claimants and frontline staff. In most study states, the orientation to AJC services therefore included an introduction to assessment and LMI resources, and claimants were expected to complete these activities on their own.
2. ***Study states were split in how they bundled the required activities, allowing claimants to complete the mandated services either in a single AJC visit or over two AJC visits.*** The four states that opted for a single-visit format (Georgia, Minnesota, Washington, and West Virginia) emphasized a desire to streamline service delivery and avoid the burden of requiring claimants to make more than one in-person visit to an AJC. They also thought this approach worked well in their similar programs, such as UI REA and WPRS. The five states that required two visits (Arkansas, Delaware, Massachusetts, Nebraska, and New Hampshire) emphasized the value of requiring claimants to interact with AJC resources and staff more often, as well as efficiencies associated with scheduling different types of activities (such as group sessions versus one-on-one meetings) on different dates. Relative to states that required one visit, states that used a two-visit approach tended to have a longer—and possibly more in-depth—group workshop. However, two-visit states typically needed to rely on more manual procedures to track service participation because their existing computer systems were not set up to allow for a two-part service completion process.
3. ***Frontline staff perceived that EUC08 claimants benefited from interactions with other long-term unemployed claimants through a group service format.*** Although group service provision is not new, frontline staff perceived that the orientation workshops and other group-based services were especially valuable in helping EUC08 claimants recognize that other people faced similar challenges. This was thought to be especially important given that EUC08 claimants were perceived by staff to be more isolated from society and discouraged than other unemployment benefit claimants because of their lengthy but unsuccessful job search efforts. Through group services, claimants were able to encourage each other, network, and occasionally share leads for jobs. Providing services in a group format also helped staff serve large numbers of EUC08 RES/REA claimants in a timely way. The distinctive needs of this target population and this type of program might lead a state to decide to provide services in a group format even if it prefers one-on-one service provision in many other circumstances.
4. ***Frontline staff introduced claimants to, but were generally unable to provide much detailed assistance with, skills assessment and LMI services.*** The assessments were thought to help claimants identify their knowledge, interests and aptitudes, and transferable skills,

while the LMI was thought to help them develop realistic reemployment expectations. However, in most cases, the staff thought it infeasible to spend much one-on-one time with each claimant to ensure that he or she understood and could make full use of the resulting information; claimants were largely left on their own to determine whether or how to use the results. In addition, most study states relied on claimants' self-attestation of assessment completion. It is possible that strategies that require claimants to apply information from these reemployment services to their own situations would be helpful. For example, Massachusetts' program required that claimants use their assessment and LMI results to develop detailed career plans. The state's frontline staff believed that imposing these requirements helped claimants engage more actively with the information, and formulate more realistic reemployment expectations and stronger job search plans.

5. ***Most states used the same thresholds for assessing work search effort, such as the minimum weekly number of contacts with employers, for the EUC08 and regular UI programs.*** Administrators in three states nevertheless indicated that they would have liked to impose higher work search standards for EUC08 claimants to encourage them to intensify their search efforts. From among these three states, only New Hampshire was able to do so formally. This finding, coupled with the widespread view that the quality of work search done by many of the EUC08 RES/REA claimants could be improved, suggests that a reassessment of the work search standards, possibly even early in claimants' unemployment spells, might be warranted; however, such an endeavor to review current practices and formulate recommendations about changes would need to take into account many issues that were outside of the scope of this study.
6. ***State and frontline staff reported that they engaged EUC08 claimants in a number of additional services beyond the four mandatory RES/REA program activities.*** Some of these additional activities that were required included completing resume reviews (4 states), developing customers' individualized service or career plans (2 states), or career guidance (1 state). Additional services, when required, were viewed by staff as critical to the success of the claimants' efforts to become reemployed.

### **Perceived characteristics and needs of the EUC08 claimants**

Because the claimants who were subject to EUC08 RES/REA participation requirements were long-term unemployed, DOL expected them to be facing significant difficulties to reemployment and in need of intensive supports or guidance to become reemployed. During our site visits, we asked state administrators and frontline staff who provide services directly to claimants for their perspectives about important similarities and differences between the EUC08 RES/REA claimants and regular UI claimants, including those who were called in for WPRS or UI REA services. We also asked staff for their perceptions about the needs of EUC08 claimants and whether the EUC08 RES/REA program services provided by the frontline staff were well suited to address those needs. Although the initial study plans included use of state-reported aggregate data to inform these questions, concerns about the quality of the data precluded the reporting of descriptive statistics about the characteristics of EUC08 claimants. Based on descriptions by state and frontline staff in the nine study states, we identified several overarching themes about these issues:



1. ***While staff generally thought that EUC08 claimants had backgrounds and characteristics similar to regular UI claimants, they frequently highlighted differences in the two groups' circumstances and attitudes.*** Frontline staff reported that, relative to regular UI claimants, EUC08 claimants were more likely to be passed over by employers because of their long time out of work and, therefore, to be more discouraged. For these reasons, they were more likely to need encouragement from both staff and through other venues, such as interaction with other job seekers in similar situations.
2. ***Staff thought that the mandatory EUC08 RES/REA services were important tools in helping EUC08 claimants achieve reemployment and were well matched to their needs.*** Their interactions with claimants allowed them to stress to claimants the urgency of their situations, including that EUC08 benefits would end soon. Frontline staff strongly encouraged and offered assistance to help claimants re-energize their job search, develop realistic expectations given available job opportunities, and use more effective job search strategies to access those opportunities. Despite a challenging labor market, staff highlighted steps that the EUC08 claimants could and should take to become reemployed, including the reemployment services that were part of the program. Staff also thought it appropriate to have eligibility reviews as part of the program; both UI and WP staff supported the view that claimants should not be receiving EUC08 benefits if they failed to engage in an active work search.
3. ***The threat of sanctions for nonparticipation in EUC08 RES/REA services was viewed as effective and appropriate for engaging claimants.*** Frontline staff perceived that the threat of loss of EUC08 benefits reinforced the message that claimants needed to revamp their job search strategies. They thought the sanctions, such as one-week or indefinite denials of EUC08 benefits until participation requirements were completed, were both consistent with the program goals and effective at encouraging participation in the mandated services. They reported that most claimants who had their benefits cut for nonparticipation would promptly reach out to reschedule the missed service and begin complying with the requirements.

### **Additional implications for designing, implementing, and assessing future programs**

As a result of their experiences operating the EUC08 RES/REA program, staff in study states gained insights about how to improve the operations and delivery of UI and reemployment services. Many of these insights are discussed above and in the chapters of this report. At the time that our site visits occurred, we also heard how some states had incorporated, or were hoping to incorporate, their insights into their ongoing activities. These included applying for an UI REA grant, automating call-in procedures for UI REA services, providing more services using a group format, or implementing a new program that would offer similar services to any AJC customer and be mandatory for some or most UI claimants.

In the discussion that follows, we highlight three additional implications for designing, implementing, and assessing future programs. These insights can be of value to DOL and policymakers as they develop and refine other initiatives to aid unemployed workers and ensure the integrity of the unemployment benefits system.

1. ***A mandate for most or all claimants to participate in reemployment services earlier in their unemployment periods might be more effective than one that waits until claimants are long-term unemployed.*** State and frontline staff in several states thought that it would be better to impose required activities before claimants become long-term unemployed. Earlier service delivery was expected to reduce the likelihood that claimants would develop ineffective work search habits or become discouraged. In addition, staff thought that as a result of earlier receipt of services and the resulting faster reemployment, claimants could avoid having employers look upon them unfavorably because they had gone so long without work. Finally, earlier service delivery was expected to allow some claimants to take advantage of reemployment strategies—such as training—that become less viable as claimants’ length of time unemployed increases and their remaining time receiving unemployment benefits decreases. Research on the UI REA program, which serves claimants earlier in their unemployment spells, indicates that the program was effective in three of four study states at reducing benefit receipt and exhaustion rates (Poe-Yamagata et al. 2011). However, both the UI REA and the WPRS program try to limit costs by targeting their participation mandates to subgroups of claimants. Some staff the study team interviewed thought that participation by all claimants who were still collecting benefits around the 12th week—later than UI REA and WPRS service delivery—might be valuable. Whether to engage claimants in services earlier, how much earlier, and which claimants should be required to participate are important unanswered research questions.
2. ***Additional efforts should be made to ensure that data collected and reported for program monitoring purposes are of high quality.*** As explained above, states were required as part of the EUC08 RES/REA program to complete two program-specific reports that could be used for program monitoring. We learned from the site visit that study states varied in the level of ease or difficulty they had when implementing procedures for generating the data for these reports, especially given the urgency to begin providing program services quickly and the temporary nature of the program. Through our analysis of the data, we found inconsistencies across states in the quality of the data—a finding that led us to significantly restrict our use of the data. Although the demands on data for research purposes are different from those for program-monitoring purposes, the reports should provide accurate and useful information. Therefore, we recommend that additional efforts be made to foster data quality for future programs so that the data consistently and accurately measure the desired information, both for monitoring purposes and for secondary purposes such as research.
3. ***Other factors besides the presence of a similar program (such as the UI REA program) might be especially important for influencing the ease and ultimate success of implementation of a new program that combines reemployment services and eligibility assessments.*** When developing their EUC08 RES/REA programs, all study states relied at least to some extent on their WPRS programs, and the six study states that had a UI REA program in place at the time relied on it as well. Although learning in depth about states’ challenges was not a goal of this study (which intentionally focused on relatively successful states), it is noteworthy that having a UI REA program initially did not appear to be essential for the successful implementation of the EUC08 RES/REA program. Furthermore, it did not appear according to the information we learned during the site visits that the study states without an initial UI REA program consistently faced greater challenges implementing the EUC08 RES/REA program than did the states with a UI REA program. The large scale of

the EUC08 RES/REA program and the speed with which it had to be implemented appeared to be more important challenges faced by all study states.

4. ***In a few study states, successful implementation of the EUC08 RES/REA program might have come about in part at the expense of other programs.*** Other research has indicated that the program was challenging for states to implement for a number of reasons, such as its requirement that they develop and implement plans to serve a large number of unemployment benefits claimants at the AJCs in a very short period of time. Our site visits confirmed this, even though the study was focused on only nine states that were thought to have been especially successful at implementing the program. According to state and frontline staff in some study states, the demands of the EUC08 RES/REA program led to the de-emphasis of activities for other reemployment service programs. Thus, any assessment of the effects of the EUC08 RES/REA program and states' successes and challenges in implementing it—or any assessment of similar large-scale, mandatory efforts in the future—should take into account possible effects on the operations of other reemployment programs operated at AJCs.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

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Typically, unemployed workers who have met their state's eligibility criteria can receive up to 26 weeks of unemployment benefits, which are intended to provide a financial cushion while the workers adapt to loss of a job and household income. These benefits, which are state-funded and often referred to as regular Unemployment Insurance (UI), are available regardless of the strength of the economy. However, when the nation as a whole is in a recession, or recovering from one, Congress often enacts legislation that makes Federally funded weeks of unemployment benefits available to long-term unemployed workers through a temporary emergency program. The Emergency Unemployment Compensation Act of 2008 and related legislation provided these benefits in response to the recession that began in December 2007. The program, referred to as the EUC08 program to reflect its originating legislation, began in June 2008 and ended in December 2013. During this period, more than \$230 billion in EUC08 benefits was paid.<sup>2</sup>

To receive either regular UI or emergency unemployment benefits, claimants must meet ongoing eligibility requirements by being able to work, available for work, and actively seeking work. Regular UI claimants are also encouraged, and in some cases required, to participate in reemployment services available through American Job Centers (AJCs; formerly One-Stop Career Centers). Over the past 20 years, a variety of initiatives have been undertaken to strengthen service delivery and the enforcement of eligibility requirements for regular UI claimants (O'Leary 2006). Until recently, however, less attention was paid to the provision of reemployment services or enforcement of eligibility requirements for recipients of emergency unemployment benefits.

The Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012 (the "Act") added a requirement that states must provide Reemployment Services and Reemployment Eligibility Assessments (RES/REAs) to certain types of EUC08 benefit claimants. The EUC08 RES/REA program had two important components: (1) provision of specific reemployment services to claimants of EUC08 benefits, and (2) increased scrutiny of eligibility for benefits. According to data reported by states to the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), more than 5 million claimants were scheduled for EUC08 RES/REA program services, and more than 3 million received program services nationwide between early 2012 and the end of 2013.<sup>3</sup> However, a survey of state UI administrators conducted in 2012 by the National Association of State Workforce Agencies found that 77 percent of the 44 respondent states faced challenges implementing the EUC08 RES/REA program (Wandner 2013). For example, many states initially struggled with high no-show rates by claimants for their scheduled appointments or services and claimants' frustration with the participation requirements.

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<sup>2</sup> The amount was calculated from data available at [http://oui.doleta.gov/unemploy/docs/euc/euc\\_activity.xls](http://oui.doleta.gov/unemploy/docs/euc/euc_activity.xls) (accessed January 26, 2015).

<sup>3</sup> These estimates are based on calculations of data from the Employment and Training Administration 9128u reports about the EUC08 RES/REA program (Employment and Training Administration 2014). The data were provided by DOL to Mathematica during March 2014.

In spring 2013, the U.S. Department of Labor directed Mathematica Policy Research to conduct a study of the EUC08 RES/REA program.<sup>4</sup> Motivated in part by the challenges states faced when implementing the program, this study has focused on identifying strategies that selected states used to successfully implement the EUC08 RES/REA program at scale, as well as practices for all states to consider in the future for similar programs. By examining in detail the experiences of nine states, the study was structured to gain insights into how states designed their EUC08 RES/REA programs; what strategies states used to foster claimants' participation in services and to overcome challenges with program administration; and what lessons were learned. For the analysis, we relied primarily on qualitative data collected through in-depth discussions with state and AJC staff during study team visits to the states. However, we supplemented the qualitative information with an analysis of data reported by states to DOL to learn about the speed at which states implemented the EUC08 RES/REA program, as well as the portion of EUC08 claimants who participated when they were required to do so.

In this chapter, we provide an overview of the EUC08 RES/REA program (Section A); highlight important factors that likely influenced states' implementation of the program (Section B); describe the study's research questions, data sources and analysis methodologies, and process for selecting states to visit (Section C); and present the structure of the rest of the report (Section D).

## **A. Overview of the EUC08 RES/REA program**

Depending on the level of the total unemployment rate in a given state, the EUC08 program included up to four tiers of emergency unemployment benefits for people who exhausted their regular UI benefits. The details of the conditions under which claimants could receive benefits from each tier were complex and varied over time. Nevertheless, at the peak of the EUC08 program, unemployed workers who exhausted all their regular UI benefits and who were in states with very high unemployment rates could receive up to 53 weeks of EUC08 benefits through all four tiers of EUC08 benefits.<sup>5</sup> UI claimants became eligible for each of the four tiers of EUC08 benefits sequentially, rather than all at once. That is, UI claimants who became eligible for EUC08 Tier 1 benefits, and collected all their EUC08 Tier 1 benefits, could then become eligible for Tier 2 benefits if such benefits were available (or became available) in their state, and so on for subsequent tiers of EUC08 benefits in effect. Shortly after the Act was

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<sup>4</sup> This study of the EUC08 RES/REA program is being conducted as part of the research contract entitled "The Unemployment Insurance State Reemployment Demonstration (SRD) Projects Under the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012 National Evaluation Coordination," contract number M0147/GS23F8198HGS23F8198H.

<sup>5</sup> Most of the changes the Act made to the unemployment benefits system, including the EUC08 program, were complex and are not a direct focus of this study. Importantly for the purposes of this study, as a result of the Act and subsequent legislation, all states except one retained access to Tier 1 benefits until the end of the EUC08 program in December 2013; these states were required throughout this time to implement the RES/REA program that is the focus of this study. (The exception, North Carolina, was required to implement the RES/REA program until its EUC08 agreement with the Federal government ended during June 2013.) Generally speaking, however, access to weeks of EUC08 benefits in each of the four tiers of the EUC08 program had become more restrictive by the time the program ended. Another Federally funded unemployment benefits program—the Extended Benefits (EB) program—also provided either 13 or 20 weeks of benefits to long-term unemployed workers in states with unusually high unemployment rates. The EB program did not have an RES/REA program comparable to the EUC08 RES/REA program.

passed, all UI jurisdictions (the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands) were offering Tier 1 and 2 benefits and, therefore, required to operate the EUC08 RES/REA program.

The Act required that people who began receiving EUC08 Tier 1 benefits, or who transitioned from Tier 1 to Tier 2 benefits on March 23, 2012, or later, participate in the EUC08 RES/REA program.<sup>6</sup> DOL provided guidance to state agencies through Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) No. 20-11, 20-11, Change 1, and 20-11, Change 2 (Oates 2012b, 2012d, and 2012e, respectively). This guidance explained that all states were required to implement four elements of the program:

1. Orientation to services available through AJCs,
2. Skills assessments,
3. Provision of labor market and career information, and
4. A review of work search activities to determine eligibility for continued EUC08 benefit receipt.

The Act required that states review claimants' continued eligibility for benefits in person (with a few exceptions allowed), while it gave states the option to conduct the other activities either in person or remotely. The Act also gave states the option to offer additional services to EUC08 RES/REA claimants. Such services could include more comprehensive or specialized assessments, development of individual reemployment plans, career and job search counseling, referrals for training, and additional reemployment services.

As mentioned, to qualify for unemployment benefits, claimants are required to meet continuing eligibility requirements pertaining to being able to work, available for work, and actively seeking work. TEGL 20-11 defined "actively seeking work" when determining eligibility for EUC08 as part of the RES/REA program (Oates 2012b). Claimants were expected to do the following:

- Register for employment services based on the requirements of the state workforce agency,
- Engage in an active search for work that is appropriate to labor market conditions and the claimant's skills and capabilities (including achieving at least the minimum number of weekly contacts with employers, as required by the state),
- Maintain a work search record, including which employer(s) were contacted, the method(s) of contact, and the date(s) of contact, and
- When requested, provide the work search record to the state workforce agency.

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<sup>6</sup> For brevity throughout the report, we typically refer to this group of claimants as EUC08 claimants, even though they are not representative of all EUC08 claimants.

Compliance with these work search criteria for those who began receiving Tier 1 or Tier 2 benefits was assessed as part of the EUC08 RES/REA eligibility review process. However, the requirements also applied to continuing EUC08 claimants.<sup>7</sup>

Although the Act was structured to require widespread participation by Tier 1 and Tier 2 claimants in program services, EUC08 claimants who participated in EUC08 RES/REA program services when starting Tier 1 benefits were not required to participate again when transitioning from Tier 1 to Tier 2 EUC08 benefits. Thus, it could be expected that states' EUC08 RES/REA program caseloads transitioned from being a mix of Tier 1 and Tier 2 claimants initially to almost exclusively Tier 1 claimants over time.

Furthermore, states were allowed, on a discretionary basis, to waive the RES/REA participation requirement for some EUC08 Tier 1 and Tier 2 claimants. People who had recently completed similar services or activities through other programs while receiving regular UI benefits were eligible for waivers. Although states had many different types of reemployment programs to aid unemployed workers, two common ones that could have led to a waiver of the EUC08 RES/REA participation requirement were the Worker Profiling and Reemployment Services (WPRS) system and the UI REA program:

- The *WPRS system*, established in 1993, requires that states identify people who have just started receiving regular UI benefits and are considered most likely to exhaust them. The identified UI claimants must participate in reemployment services, such as an orientation meeting to learn about reemployment service assistance available through AJCs.
- Since 2005, DOL has provided funding to state workforce agencies to administer a *UI REA program*, also targeted at a subset of individuals receiving regular UI benefits. Unlike with the WPRS program, however, the subset of claimants who were targeted varies across states. According to UI Program Letter No. 10-14, UI REA programs must include in-person UI eligibility reviews, the provision of information on the local labor market, the development of individual reemployment plans, and referrals to reemployment services or training; in fiscal year 2013, 41 states operated a UI REA program (Seleznow 2014).

In addition, states could grant waivers to people with a justifiable cause for nonparticipation. For example, states could choose to give a waiver if the claimant had to travel a very long distance to attend in-person services at an AJC or had good cause for nonparticipation as defined under state UI laws (such as when the claimant was enrolled in an approved long-term training program).

## **B. Factors that likely influenced states' implementation of the EUC08 RES/REA program**

Because the unemployment compensation system is a partnership between states and the federal government, states have flexibility in how they structure and administer programs within the system. Thus, at the outset, it could be expected that each state would implement a special program such as the EUC08 RES/REA program in a unique way, incorporating Federal

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<sup>7</sup> Active work search among the larger pool of claimants of EUC08 benefits, including claimants of Tier 1 and Tier 2 benefits, also was monitored by states based on random audits of claimants. UI Program Letter No. 04-10, Change 9 and UI Program Letter, Change 10, provide more information about the audits (Oates 2012a, 2012e). These audits are not a focus of this study.



legislation and guidelines to fit within the states' existing structure and to meet the distinctive needs of its unemployed workers. Nevertheless, there were four overarching issues that states had to take into account when they designed and began implementing the program:

1. ***Short implementation time frame.*** Enacted on February 22, 2012, the Act required that all states implement the EUC08 RES/REA program and provide services on or after the 30th day after the date of enactment—March 23, 2012. According to TEGL 20-11, states were also required to notify non-exempt claimants, by the third week of their EUC08 claim (for their current tier), of their requirement to begin receiving appropriate reemployment services (Oates 2012b). DOL guidance further required that the in-person RES/REA be scheduled by the claimant's sixth week of their current EUC08 claim series. Thus, for the earliest cohorts of claimants subject to these requirements, states only had a few weeks to establish procedures and implement their new program.
2. ***Large number of long-term unemployed claimants.*** For the original statutory duration of the EUC08 program (which was scheduled to expire on January 2, 2013, according to the Act), DOL projected in TEGL 20-11 that 3.2 million people would file for EUC08 Tier 1 benefits and that 1.4 million claimants receiving EUC08 Tier 1 benefits would transition to EUC08 Tier 2 benefits (Oates 2012b). States were expected to provide EUC08 RES/REA program services to most of these 4.6 million people. For most states, the number of claimants who would need to receive EUC08 RES/REA program services was expected to be far greater than the number served through existing reemployment service programs for unemployment benefits claimants, such as the WPRS and UI REA programs. In addition, DOL expected EUC08 claimants to face structural and skills-related reemployment challenges unique to the long-term unemployed. When designing their programs, states needed to identify ways to provide services to the large number of claimants who would be required to participate in the EUC08 RES/REA program. The large scale of the program was a consideration for when, how and where services were provided. For example, early in the program, some states needed to provide services at locations, such as schools, with meeting rooms that were larger than those available at AJCs so that claimants could receive services in a timely manner.
3. ***Limited resources across the workforce system.*** Despite having to serve large numbers of people with potentially intensive needs for support, states also had to implement the EUC08 RES/REA program in the context of a challenging economic climate, with both tight budgets and limited staff resources across the workforce system. At the start of the program, DOL paid states \$85 for each EUC08 claimant who completed the mandated services; as explained in UI Program Letter 13-13, this amount was reduced by 10.1 percent, to \$76.42, starting on March 31, 2013, as a result of Federal sequestration (Oates 2013). DOL recognized that it might be challenging for states to implement the program in a way that would be fully covered by the available reimbursement amount per claimant. Hence, DOL encouraged states to use additional funding sources, if needed, to support program activities and services, including EUC08 administrative funds to perform eligibility assessments, Wagner-Peyser (WP) and Workforce Investment Act funds to support delivery of core and intensive reemployment services, or the states' shares of a \$500 million distribution made through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. The states' shares of this distribution became available in 2009 and did not carry an expiration date, so states that had

not yet fully used (or obligated) their shares could, if desired, allocate these funds to support the EUC08 RES/REA program.

4. **Temporary nature of the program.** Because the EUC08 program was temporary, the EUC08 RES/REA program was also designed to be temporary. Like other congressionally legislated emergency unemployment benefits programs for long-term unemployed workers, the EUC08 program was initially established for a short time period, and then extended through subsequent legislation for additional short time periods. With the passage of the Act, the EUC08 program was extended to December 29, 2012. Although the EUC08 program was eventually extended to December 2013—so the EUC08 RES/REA program existed in total for about one year and nine months—it was not known in early 2012 that this would be the case. In early spring of 2012, state administrators did not know whether the EUC08 RES/REA program would exist for about nine months only or for a longer period of time. This uncertainty about the length that the program would be operational influenced some of the decisions that state administrators made when designing and implementing it.

### **C. Study research questions, data sources, analysis methods, and selection of study states**

In conjunction with DOL, Mathematica developed, a design for the study that included both research questions about the EUC08 RES/REA program and plans to collect and analyze qualitative and quantitative data to answer the questions. Because the study plans included collection of qualitative data through site visits to nine states, which we refer to as the *study states*, we also developed criteria to select the study states from among all states. In this section, we present the study's research questions, the criteria used to select study states, and the data sources and analysis methods used.

#### **1. Study research questions**

The study research questions can be organized in two groups pertaining to (1) states' program designs and implementation experiences, and (2) EUC08 claimants' waivers and participation rates (Table I.1). The primary data source for answers to the questions about program designs and implementation experiences was in-depth discussions with state-level administrators and AJC staff during in-person visits to the nine study states. Because information was already available to DOL about common challenges that states faced, the study focused on strategies that state-level program administrators and AJC staff used to implement the EUC08 RES/REA program.

The study also included research questions about quantifiable aspects of program implementation, such as the proportion of EUC08 Tier 1 and Tier 2 claimants who received waivers from participating in the EUC08 RES/REA program and the participation rates among claimants who were mandated to receive services. The study design relied on an analysis of state-level aggregate data reported to DOL to answer questions about these topics. As discussed in more detail in Section I.C and Appendix A, the study was initially intended to ask additional questions about the characteristics and outcomes of EUC08 RES/REA claimants, but limitations of the state-level aggregate data made it impossible to confidently answer such questions.

**Table I.1. Study research questions**

Research questions <sup>a</sup>	Main data source used to answer the research questions <sup>b</sup>
<b>States' program designs and implementation experiences</b>	
1. <b>What strategies did states use to implement the mandated EUC08 RES/REA service requirements?</b> How were claimants notified of their participation requirements? To whom were waivers granted?	On-site discussions with state and local staff in nine states
2. <b>How were UI and other state staff resources allocated to the program?</b> Which agencies were involved in implementing the program? Were the same staff used to deliver EUC08 RES/REA and UI REA program services? To what extent were other resources available through AJCs utilized? What strategies did states use to foster communication across different agencies and partners? What processes were used to monitor service delivery and program performance?	On-site discussions with state and local staff in nine states
3. <b>Which components were delivered in-person, and which were delivered online or remotely (for example, via phone or video conference)?</b> What was the typical sequence of services? What follow-up was conducted to ensure claimants fulfilled the requirements? What additional services, beyond the four mandatory activities, were typically provided to claimants? What was the rationale for adding these services?	On-site discussions with state and local staff in nine states
4. <b>What were the perceived characteristics and needs of EUC08 RES/REA program claimants?</b> How did this compare to the characteristics and needs of other unemployment benefit claimants, such as WPRS and UI REA claimants? How did claimants respond to the EUC08 RES/REA program? How well-suited were mandatory EUC08 RES/REA activities to the characteristics and needs of these claimants?	On-site discussions with state and local staff in nine states
5. <b>What practices for serving the EUC08 claimants were viewed as successful?</b> What adjustments or changes were made to the EUC08 RES/REA program once it was implemented, and why? Which outreach strategies showed promise for encouraging participation in the program? How were states able to cope with the high volume of claimants? How did states integrate the UI REA and EUC08 RES/REA programs in delivering services? Were efficiencies created through sharing staff or use of common tools (for example, case management and client information systems) between the UI system and AJCs? What strategies were used to facilitate meeting Federal reporting requirements?	On-site discussions with state and local staff in nine states
<b>EUC08 RES/REA waiver and participation rates</b>	
1. <b>How many EUC08 claimants potentially subject to the RES/REA program mandate received waivers from the participation requirement?</b>	Quantitative aggregate data reported by states to DOL
2. <b>How many EUC08 claimants participated in RES/REAs?</b> How did participation rates vary across states and over time?	Quantitative aggregate data reported by states to DOL

<sup>a</sup> The list of study research questions shown in this table deviates from the list specified during the design phase of the study. Most notably, the study design included additional research questions that we were not able to answer because of problems with the quality of the state-reported aggregate data. These questions pertained to the characteristics of EUC08 RES/REA claimants, their receipt of specific types of mandated or additional services, their outcomes, and the extent of disqualifications of claimants from benefit receipt due to lack of completion of mandated services. The table includes only the questions for which the study could provide answers. We also made a few other minor updates to the specification of some research questions to improve wording clarity and to better reflect the information we attained during our site visit data collection efforts.

<sup>b</sup> When feasible, study data other than those listed as the main data source were also used to address the research questions.

DOL = Department of Labor; EUC08 = Emergency Unemployment Compensation Act of 2008; RES/REA = reemployment services and reemployment eligibility assessments; UI = Unemployment Insurance.

Note that all the research questions and analysis approaches used in this study are descriptive. We did not develop or estimate any causal models to estimate the effectiveness of the EUC08 RES/REA program, because such modeling was beyond the scope of this evaluation. Hence, no causal conclusions about the effectiveness of the EUC08 RES/REA program should be drawn from the findings of this study. For example, given the study design, we cannot determine whether claimants' participation in the EUC08 RES/REA program led to better labor market outcomes (such as faster reemployment or higher earnings) than they would have otherwise obtained. Nevertheless, the study provides valuable insights about state staff's

perceptions of their successful strategies for designing and implementing the EUC08 RES/REA program, including overcoming challenges.

## **2. Selection of study states**

We developed and implemented criteria to select nine states for in-person in-depth interviews with state and local office staff. DOL recognized that some lessons could also be drawn from learning about the experiences of states that struggled with program implementation but gave priority to learning about the practices in states in which implementation was perceived to have gone well. Thus, we strove to identify states that appeared to have done an especially good job of implementing the EUC08 RES/REA program. Importantly, we did not select states based on their programs' actual or perceived effects on claimants' reemployment outcomes, given the study's focus on implementation issues, nor did we select study states to be statistically representative of all states. DOL also wanted study states to be diverse on a range of characteristics, such as size of the EUC08 RES/REA program, geographic location, and whether the state had a UI REA program. For example, DOL expected that many states with experience administering a UI REA program would rely heavily on that program as a starting point for designing and administering the EUC08 RES/REA program. Thus, learning about the similarities and differences between the EUC08 RES/REA program and the UI REA program, among states that had both programs, was an important part of the study. Ultimately, through inclusion of a diverse set of states, we would be able to obtain a wide set of perspectives through the site visits.

We developed criteria to select states for the study in conjunction with DOL. First and foremost, we took into account DOL's preferences for which states to visit. Two types of considerations were made. One was DOL staff's nominations about which states might be good candidates for learning about program implementation. Based on DOL staff's extensive knowledge of states' EUC08 RES/REA implementation experiences through their visits to and other communications with states, these nominations strongly influenced which states we included in the study. However, we also considered states that had not been nominated by DOL because DOL staff's knowledge about each state varied. In addition, as a result of other criteria for selecting states to be in the study, we did not include as study states all the states DOL nominated. The second consideration was DOL staff's preference for including in the study only states for which the UI and WP program staff were in the same state-level department. It was expected that focusing on states that met this condition would help increase the efficiency of the data collection process. We ruled out from consideration states that did not meet this criterion.

Second, we strove to include states that served a high proportion of EUC08 claimants who were mandated to participate in EUC08 RES/REA services but that also varied in the size of their EUC08 RES/REA programs. For site selection, we used state aggregate data covering the one-year period from April 1, 2012, to March 31, 2013, to examine the extent to which states delivered services to claimants who were mandated to receive them. (The aggregate data were from the ETA 9128u report, which is presented in TEGl 20-11, Change 2 [Oates 2012e]; the report is described in more detail in Appendix A.) As we did for the main study analysis, we calculated a participation rate (the number of claimants who were provided all required services divided by the number who were scheduled to receive services) for each state and each quarter. We wanted study states to have an average participation rate (across the available quarters of

data) in the top one-third of states—which meant a participation rate of about 75 percent or higher.

We also wanted to ensure that our study included states that had large, medium, and small EUC08 RES/REA programs. To do so, we classified states based on the average number of EUC08 claimants served by the program per quarter—with each group containing about one-third of states. Large-scale programs were those that provided all required services to an average of more than 9,000 mandated claimants per quarter, while medium- and small-scale programs served an average of 2,000 to 9,000 claimants per quarter and fewer than 2,000 claimants per quarter, respectively. Unsurprisingly, the states that were classified as operating large-scale EUC08 RES/REA programs were those with the largest number of regular UI claimants and largest population in general; however, this was not uniformly the case.<sup>8</sup>

Third, we wanted to include states that obtained high EUC08 RES/REA participation rates after six months of implementation. We also wanted to include both states that might have initially struggled to achieve a good participation rate and those that achieved a high rate early on. That is, we wanted to foster diversity across study states based on whether they were relatively fast or slow in rolling out implementation of the program, especially given that states were required under the Act to implement the EUC08 RES/REA program and provide services on or after the 30th day after the date of enactment of the Act (that is, by March 23, 2012). We classified states that had an average participation rate of at least 75 percent during the six-month period from October 1, 2012, to March 31, 2013, as having reached a high participation rate. Then we calculated the change in participation rates as the difference between the participation rate during this six-month period and the participation rate in the first quarter of implementation (April 1, 2012, to June 30, 2012). We classified each state into one of three categories. Those with an increase in their participate rate between these two time periods of at least 15 percentage points were classified as having a large increase in their participation rate. Those with a decrease of at least 15 percentage points were classified as having a large decrease. Finally, those with a change in magnitude smaller than 15 percentage points, either positively or negatively, were classified as having a small change in their participation rates over time. When we selected states for the study, we selected from among those categories of states that had either a large increase or a small change in their participation rates; we did not include in the study any states with a large decrease over time in their participation rates.

Fourth, and as mentioned above, DOL wanted to ensure that states selected for visits were diverse on a range of characteristics such as geographic location and the existence of a UI REA program. We used these criteria to help increase the diversity of the study states based on these factors, but we did so only to distinguish between states that were equally suitable for site visits

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<sup>8</sup> There are many reasons why state rankings on the number of regular UI claimants or population size might differ from rankings based on claimants served through the EUC08 RES/REA program. States vary in their rates of unemployment and in the use of the UI program by unemployed workers. In addition, UI claimants in different states could have different likelihoods of exhausting their regular UI benefit entitlements and transitioning to EUC08 Tier 1 benefits or Tier 2 benefits. There might also be differences across states in the likelihood that an EUC08 Tier 1 or Tier 2 claimant received a waiver from the EUC08 RES/REA participation requirement, which would affect the number of claimants scheduled for, and provided, services.

based on the other criteria. We aimed to include in the study at least one state in each DOL region and a mix of states that had or did not have a regular UI REA program.

We selected a diverse set of nine states that met the site selection criteria most closely for site visits: Arkansas, Delaware, Georgia, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Nebraska, New Hampshire, Washington, and West Virginia (Table I.2). Most of the states had a high average EUC08 RES/REA participation rate. In addition, the set included states with small-, medium-, and large-scale EUC08 RES/REA programs. For example, Georgia was ranked as having the fourth-largest average number of claimants served per quarter, while New Hampshire was ranked 46th. Most states also achieved a high eventual rate of participation. Four states had large increases in their participation rates from lower rates early in the program, while the other five had relatively small changes. The states span all six DOL regions, which indicate significant geographic diversity. In addition, the set of nine states contains six that operated a UI REA program in early 2012 and three that did not. All nine states agreed to participate in the study and hosted a visit by research team staff.

**Table I.2. Characteristics used for selection of the nine study states**

State	EUC08 RES/REA program characteristics					DOL region	UI REA program
	Average rate of participation	Eventual rate of participation	Scale of program	Change in participation over time			
Arkansas	High	High	Medium	Small change	4	No	
Delaware	Low	Low	Small	Small change	2	No	
Georgia	High	High	Large	Large increase	3	No <sup>a</sup>	
Massachusetts	High	High	Large	Large increase	1	Yes	
Minnesota	High	High	Medium	Small change	5	Yes	
Nebraska	High	High	Medium	Large increase	5	Yes	
New Hampshire	High	High	Small	Large increase	1	Yes	
Washington	High	High	Large	Small change	6	Yes	
West Virginia	High	High	Medium	Small change	2	Yes	

Source: Analysis of data from the 9128u and 9128 reports.

Notes: The information in the table is based on data covering April 1, 2012, to March 31, 2013, which were used in the site selection process.

<sup>a</sup> Georgia started a UI REA program in October 2012.

UI REA = Unemployment Insurance Reemployment and Eligibility Assessments.

### 3. Data sources and analysis methodology

As described above, the study relied on two main sources of information: (1) in-person site visit discussions, and (2) state-level aggregate data reported by states to DOL. We discuss each of these data sources in this section.

**Site Visit Data.** Our qualitative data collection relied heavily on in-person interviews with state and local office (AJC) staff from the UI and WP programs conducted during site visits to the nine study states. At the state level, we conducted interviews typically with the UI program director, the EUC08 RES/REA program coordinator, and the state-level WP program director. At the local office level, we interviewed frontline staff who interacted directly with EUC08 RES/REA program claimants, such as through the eligibility review process or the provision of

reemployment services. These staff were state employees from either the WP program or the UI program and were located at a local AJC near the state central office. Although it was important for the study to learn about frontline staff's perspectives and experiences, it is helpful to keep in mind that the data obtained from frontline staff at only one AJC in each state cannot be interpreted to represent the perspectives and experiences of all EUC08 RES/REA frontline staff in the state. For states that operated a UI REA program, we also interviewed state central office and AJC staff who were involved in that program; in some cases, this was the same group of staff as those who administered the EUC08 RES/REA program. Ultimately, however, the set of staff interviewed for each site visit was adapted based on the specific organizational structure within the state.

Conducted individually or as a group, the site visit interviews covered a wide range of topics. We discussed (1) factors that influenced program design and how the state planned for implementation; (2) implementation processes and strategies; (3) coordination between the UI and WP programs, including staffing issues; (4) engagement of claimants in the EUC08 RES/REA program components; (5) delivery of program services; and (6) lessons learned. The interviews were guided by a master protocol, though study staff had flexibility to adapt their questions as needed during interviews to pursue interesting lines of discussion. In practice, this means that some topics were not covered during each of the nine site visits to the same uniform level of depth, and there is variation across study states in the richness of information available on some specific topics. Furthermore, although we strove to assure interview respondents that they could answer our questions with openness and candor, we cannot ascertain whether or to what extent they did so. It is possible that they might have felt especially reluctant to share perspectives that either were contrary to official state or Federal policy or were on topics perceived to be sensitive in nature.

The visits, conducted during December 2013 and January 2014, lasted about one and a half days each, which ensured that we were able to discuss the topics with the appropriate state and local office staff. Although the EUC08 program expired at the end of calendar year 2013, we do not think this affected our ability to learn the desired information because, generally speaking, the staff we wanted to interview were still available after the program officially ended, and the information was still fresh in their minds. Furthermore, our study plans did not require that we directly observe the delivery of EUC08 RES/REA program services, though we did so during some visits. Appendix B contains a brief summary of each site and a few of its distinctive features, based on information learned in preparation for or during the site visits.

We supplemented the site visit data with information collected through a review of program-related documents and other communications with state staff either before or after our in-person visits. The review of program documents prior to the visits was especially helpful to reduce the burden on staff in each state to provide information for the study. It covered factual information about the states, available state-specific information on implementation of the EUC08 RES/REA program and, when appropriate, the UI REA program. As a result, the visits could focus more effectively on nuanced aspects of EUC08 RES/REA program implementation.

Data collected through the site visits, review of program documents, and other communications with state staff were analyzed systematically to determine best practices and overall findings about implementation of the EUC08 RES/REA program. We aimed to cover

individual topics with multiple respondents to gain a broad perspective about the implementation experiences within each state. In addition, a cross-site analysis was conducted to identify patterns and themes across states, as well as distinctive features among the states.

**State Aggregate Data.** As part of our study design, we intended to collect and analyze state-level aggregate data provided by states to DOL. We planned to examine data about the numbers of claimants who received benefits in EUC08 Tier 1 or Tier 2,<sup>9</sup> were scheduled for EUC08 RES/REA services, participated in the services, and were disqualified from receiving benefits. We also planned to examine data on the demographic characteristics of EUC08 RES/REA claimants, the types of reemployment services and referrals they received, and their post-participation outcomes. Furthermore, we planned to examine information pertaining to the UI REA and WP programs to provide context for the findings about the EUC08 RES/REA program. We expected to be able to do the analysis for all states nationwide as well as for the subset of nine study states.

However, because of concerns about the quality of much of the information in the state aggregate data, we decided in conjunction with DOL to report findings from analysis of only a small amount of the aggregate data. Importantly, in the main chapters of this report, we present information based only on the aggregate data items for whose quality we have a reasonable level of confidence, and only for the nine study states. We included information about the numbers of EUC08 claimants who received benefits in Tier 1 or Tier 2, who were scheduled for services, and who participated in the mandated services. From these data items, we were able to estimate several important measures about the program, such as exemption and participation rates. (The former rate was defined to be one minus the ratio of claimants scheduled to receive program services to a number intended to represent the EUC08 Tier 1 and Tier 2 claimants potentially subject to the program mandate. The latter rate, as discussed above, was defined to be the ratio of the number of claimants who completed program services divided by the number scheduled for services.) Although some adjustments to the data were necessary, we concluded that the data were of adequate quality for this analysis, and it would be appropriate to draw broad and general conclusions based on patterns in them. For our analysis, we used simple descriptive statistics, such as percentages.

Appendix A provides more extensive information about the state-level aggregate reports that we used, or originally intended to use, for our analysis, as well as the quality problems we encountered with some of the data. For interested readers, and for comprehensive reporting of our analysis, this appendix also contains statistics based on the data. ***There are significant quality problems with some of the data and we strongly suggest that readers use extreme care in interpreting the information in the appendix tables and figures.***

#### **D. Structure of the rest of the report**

The remaining five chapters of the report focus on the experiences of the nine study states. Chapter II describes how the study states organized their EUC08 RES/REA programs, such as

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<sup>9</sup> To be precise, the counts are of first payments made for each EUC08 program tier. Although there are some differences between the number of “claimants” and the number of “first payments,” we refer to “claimants” here for consistency with other portions of the report.



how the UI and WP programs and staff coordinated in RES/REA implementation, whether and how temporary staff were hired to help given the program demands on frontline staff, and how staff were trained in the program. Chapter III describes the criteria states used to exempt EUC08 Tier 1 and Tier 2 claimants from participation in services and the strategies states used to engage non-exempt EUC08 claimants in services. Chapter IV describes both overarching decisions that states made about how services would be delivered and details about the content of RES/REA services and methods of service delivery to EUC08 claimants. Chapter V describes program staff's perspectives on the characteristics of RES/REA claimants, their needs, and their responses to the program. Chapter VI closes with a summary discussion of lessons learned that may aid in the design of similar programs in the future.

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## II. STARTING, ORGANIZING, AND STAFFING THE EUC08 RES/REA PROGRAM

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As described in Chapter I, the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act (the “Act”) required that states provide four mandatory services through the EUC08 RES/REA program to eligible EUC08 Tier 1 and Tier 2 claimants. At the time the program was introduced, states typically had in place services and operational procedures that were similar to what was required through the new program. However, similar programs, such as the Worker Profiling and Reemployment Services (WPRS) and the regular UI REA programs, provide services early in the regular UI claim series and are not applicable for long-term unemployed claimants who had exhausted their regular UI benefits.

In this chapter, we describe the EUC08 RES/REA program startup process, organization, staffing, and staff training in the nine study states. First, in Section A, we examine how the states leveraged the existing workforce development infrastructure and resources to achieve their goals, including how they allocated roles and responsibilities for the delivery of program services. In Section B, we discuss whether the states hired temporary staff to help in the AJCs, given the increase in responsibilities for existing frontline staff to provide the EUC08 RES/REA program services. We also categorize the ways in which states used temporary staff. In Section C, we describe how states provided initial training and ongoing guidance to frontline staff about the program.

Several themes emerged from the information about how study states set up and implemented the EUC08 RES/REA program even though each state’s situation was, in many ways, unique:

- ***Most important, and unsurprisingly, states relied heavily on their existing procedures as they developed and implemented their EUC08 RES/REA program.*** For example, states assigned responsibility for the delivery of specific services to staff from whichever agency (either UI or Wagner-Peyser [WP]) had already been delivering similar services through other programs, such as UI REA or WPRS. In five of the nine study states, this meant that WP staff provided all four mandatory services; in one state, UI staff did so. In the other three states, a combination of UI and WP staff provided the services.
- ***In essence, no state “reinvented the wheel.”*** Instead, all states took advantage of prior service delivery models that they thought worked well while making minor innovations to accommodate the unique features of the program.
- ***Because AJC staff capacity was greatly strained as EUC08 RES/REA service requirements were added to existing staff’s responsibilities, most states hired temporary staff to help with the workload.*** These staff assisted either by providing EUC08 RES/REA program services directly or by taking over responsibilities of regular staff and freeing them to provide these program services. When the latter approach was used, the training of staff could better capitalize on regular staff’s knowledge base of program services and could thus be more targeted.

## **A. Coordination between the Unemployment Insurance and Wagner-Peyser programs**

DOL expected that most states would utilize their UI and WP programs for the EUC08 RES/REA program. That is, in most states, the program was expected to capitalize on the expertise of both (1) UI staff, who are typically responsible for safeguarding the integrity of the UI program by ensuring that only claimants who are eligible for benefits receive them; and (2) WP program staff, who typically provide job search and reemployment services to job seekers at the AJCs. This collaboration was expected because of the dual focus on program integrity and on reemployment assistance for the long-term unemployed.

In states that had a UI REA program, DOL also encouraged program administrators through Training and Employment Guidance (TEGL) No. 20-11 to use the procedures and infrastructures already in place, including the communication and data-transfer processes between the UI program and reemployment service providers, while still taking into account that the new EUC08 RES/REA program would be serving significantly larger numbers of claimants (Oates 2012b). Further, the required EUC08 RES/REA services differed from those of the regular REA program, which (as described in UI Program Letter No. 10-14) include the development or review of an individual reemployment plan and a referral to at least one reemployment service or training (Seleznov 2014). One state that did not have a UI REA program, Arkansas, reported relying on two multistate consortia for technical assistance and support given that it did not have a UI REA program.

Under EUC08 RES/REA guidance provided by DOL, state administrators could assign each of the four required services to either WP or UI program staff. However, in TEGL 20-11, DOL also encouraged states to provide RES/REA services as an integrated package, in expectation that doing so would lead to efficiency and better reemployment outcomes for claimants (Oates 2012b). Although there were unique features of each state's programs, staff reported that their histories of collaborations between UI and WP staff influenced how they decided to assign responsibilities across the UI and WP programs. Inevitably, there is some subjectivity in assessments of the strength of collaboration between UI and WP agencies within a state. Nevertheless, administrators in six of the nine study states (Arkansas, Georgia, Massachusetts, Nebraska, New Hampshire, and West Virginia) uniformly reported having long, well-established histories of successful collaboration. In most of these states, because of this history, UI and WP administrators determined jointly the design of the overall EUC08 RES/REA program and how to allocate responsibilities across UI and WP staff. In Nebraska and Massachusetts, for example, UI and WP state-level administrators reported that they had decided jointly to let the WP agency take the lead in specifying procedures for, and operating, the new program.

The three states that did not uniformly report a strong history of collaboration between the UI and WP programs needed either to forge new relationships or to have responsibilities assigned to one agency only. Delaware and Washington created detailed flow charts for each step of the EUC08 RES/REA program, showing which agency and program staff were responsible for each action or aspect of the program.<sup>10</sup> Administrators in these states thought the

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<sup>10</sup> We did not explicitly ask site visit respondents whether they had developed a flow chart for assigning staff responsibilities. Other states might have thought creating a flow chart to be unnecessary because they were following the same or very similar procedures used for their UI REA or WPRS program. Alternatively, it is possible

charts helped to cultivate clear expectations about program responsibilities and also promote effective coordination and communication between UI and WP program staff. The other state that did not report a strong history of collaboration was Minnesota. UI state administrators reported that the two agencies operated with different philosophical and administrative approaches for service delivery and the tracking of program participation. As a result, the UI agency retained almost exclusive control of the program.<sup>11</sup> This was the only study state that had both the EUC08 RES/REA program and its UI REA program administered by UI frontline staff only.

When state administrators with decision-making authority designed the EUC08 RES/REA program, they designated specific UI and WP program frontline staff to be responsible for each of the mandatory components (Table II.1). For states that had a preexisting UI REA program, the four mandatory services were assigned to the same types of staff (UI or WP) that provided services in the UI REA program. In all study states, adjudication of possible eligibility issues always remained the responsibility of UI program staff, regardless of how responsibilities for the four mandatory components of the EUC08 RES/REA program were assigned to WP and/or UI staff; this is because only staff with specific training can evaluate eligibility issues, and the task must be done by trained UI staff.

Table II.1. Program responsibility for mandatory services in the EUC08 RES/REA program

State	UI Staff present at the AJCs	Four mandatory services			
		AJC orientation	Provision of labor market information	Skills assessment	In-Person eligibility review
Arkansas	Yes	WP	UI or WP	UI or WP	UI
Delaware	Yes	WP	WP	WP	WP
Georgia <sup>a</sup>	Yes	UI or WP	UI or WP	UI or WP	UI or WP
Massachusetts*		WP	WP	WP	WP
Minnesota*	Yes	UI	UI	UI	UI
Nebraska*		WP	WP	WP	WP
New Hampshire* <sup>b</sup>		WP	WP	WP	WP
Washington*		WP	WP	WP	WP
West Virginia*	Yes	UI or WP	UI or WP	UI or WP	UI or WP

Source: Interviews with state-level WP and UI administrators conducted between November 2013 and March 2014.

Note: AJC = American Job Center; UI = Unemployment Insurance; WP = Wagner-Peyser.

\* States with a preexisting UI REA program when the EUC08 RES/REA program was established.

<sup>a</sup> Georgia implemented a UI REA program after the EUC08 RES/REA program was established.

<sup>b</sup> New Hampshire had centralized UI staff for most of the period of EUC08 RES/REA program implementation but started moving UI adjudicators to the AJCs in 2013.

that state staff did create flow charts to assign responsibilities but did not volunteer this information during interviews, either because it was not deemed important to them or simply because a question about the issue was not explicitly asked.

<sup>11</sup> Because Minnesota's EUC08 RES/REA program was administered solely by UI staff, WP state-level staff were not interviewed during the site visit.

The four study states that did not have UI staff present in the AJCs prior to the start of the EUC08 RES/REA program used WP staff in the AJCs to provide all four mandatory services (Table II.1). These states wanted services to be delivered in person, and they thought using the WP staff already in the AJCs was a natural approach, in contrast to other options such as moving UI staff from the call centers to AJCs or adding new UI staff to the AJCs for the delivery of specific program activities. (States' decisions about whether to deliver services in person or remotely, when the Act allowed flexibility, is discussed in detail in Chapter IV.) According to state-level administrators from the UI and the WP programs, three of these four states had strong histories of collaboration between UI and WP. They were also states where WP staff were cross-trained in UI procedures and systems and took on similar responsibilities for the preexisting UI REA programs. Administrators in Washington, by contrast, described UI and WP as effectively "siloes" from one another prior to EUC08 RES/REA program implementation. Despite the fact that the state already had a UI REA program prior to the start of the EUC08 RES/REA program, staff thought there was little cross-program interaction. In this state, state-level administrators said that forging new relationships to design and implement the EUC08 RES/REA program was challenging in the short period of time.

Having UI staff present at the AJCs appeared to give states additional flexibility with regard to the allocation of responsibilities for the EUC08 RES/REA program. In three of the five states that had UI staff colocated with WP staff in the AJCs, the state did not specifically designate which local program staff would be responsible for delivering the EUC08 RES/REA services. Rather, the AJC managers had flexibility about how to allocate service delivery responsibilities across staff. The AJC manager that was interviewed in each of these states reported taking into consideration staff availability and skills when deciding how to deliver services. In Arkansas, for example, WP staff always administered the AJC orientation, and UI staff always administered the eligibility reviews. Although WP staff usually administered the labor market information and skills assessment components of the program, UI staff could do so. In Georgia and West Virginia, because AJC staff were cross-trained on all services provided at the AJCs, no program was specified as always delivering any specific EUC08 RES/REA service.

As mentioned above, Minnesota was the only study state where UI frontline staff delivered all four mandatory EUC08 RES/REA program services. Having UI staff deliver all program services was possible because they were already present in the AJCs and provided the UI REA program services, after which the state had modeled EUC08 RES/REA services. In some AJC locations across the state, however, WP staff were included in the EUC08 RES/REA effort through the provision of a curriculum called *Fast Forward*, which supplemented the information covered in the orientations led by UI program staff in some—but not all—AJCs in the state. (We discuss this curriculum in more detail in Chapter IV.)

## **B. Hiring of temporary staff for the EUC08 RES/REA program**

All nine study states reported experiencing significant pressures on their frontline staff due to the need to roll out the EUC08 RES/REA program quickly and on a very large scale. Two types of strategies that states used to help reduce these pressures were to hire temporary staff and to shift frontline staff's responsibilities from other activities to the new program.

Most study states hired at least some temporary WP staff, and less often UI staff, to support implementation of the EUC08 RES/REA program. This approach took one of two forms. First, four states (Massachusetts, Minnesota, Nebraska, and Washington) hired temporary staff to deliver EUC08 RES/REA services directly to EUC08 claimants. Massachusetts, for example, hired about 40 temporary frontline WP staff to deliver program services across the state. Minnesota hired some WP staff to deliver the *Fast Forward* curriculum, mentioned above.

The second approach to hiring, taken by three states (Delaware, Georgia, West Virginia), was to hire temporary staff to take over some or all of the responsibilities of experienced staff, who could then assume new responsibilities for the EUC08 RES/REA program. In Delaware, for example, state-level administrators asked for volunteers from the state merit WP staff to facilitate the EUC08 RES/REA workshops and then hired temporary staff to cover their duties, with the expectation that after the EUC08 RES/REA program ended, temporary staff would be laid off and merit staff would resume their usual duties. Temporary staff also were hired to assist UI staff with handling incoming calls, scheduling and rescheduling workshops, and making fact-finding calls to EUC08 claimants. This freed up experienced UI staff to handle more adjudications, given the increased number of nonmonetary issues that were identified as a result of claimants' nonparticipation in program services or potential noncompliance with the EUC08 work search requirements and the fact that only merit staff can adjudicate issues on claims. More generally, the approach taken by these three states allowed them to take advantage of the institutional knowledge that experienced staff could bring to the EUC08 RES/REA program.

Regardless of whether or not states hired temporary staff, state administrators made decisions about the priorities among frontline staff's responsibilities, and the requirement to provide EUC08 RES/REA services typically trumped other state re-employment activities as a priority for staff time because claimants who were required to participate in the program were mandated by law to comply after being notified to attend the session or to present justifiable cause for failure to do so. For example, Minnesota diverted experienced UI staff from other activities, such as the UI REA program, to provide the four core components of the EUC08 RES/REA. State staff thought that it was easier and faster to divert current staff than to hire new temporary staff, especially given the short expected duration of the EUC08 RES/REA program. After diverting frontline staff from UI REA activities to EUC08 RES/REA activities, the state had concerns about their ability to meet the UI REA program goals agreed to with DOL. However, in the end, they were able to do so because the EUC08 RES/REA workload was smaller than originally projected. Nebraska staff also recognized that administering the program led to a reduction in the other reemployment services activities that the state could provide, because they believed the program funds for the EUC08 RES/REA program were inadequate for the services that were required and chose to use WP funds to supplement the EUC08 RES/REA program funds.

### **C. Training of EUC08 RES/REA frontline staff**

No matter how the responsibilities for the four mandatory services were assigned across the UI and WP agencies, state-level staff had to communicate expectations and procedures for RES/REA program activities to UI and WP frontline staff to ensure that the program was implemented consistently and appropriately across the state. Taking into account the programs and policies already in place in each state, initial training had to be provided on several aspects

of the program, including participation requirements, operational procedures (including service delivery and content), tracking participation and completion of requirements, cross-agency communication and coordination, and methods of following up on eligibility or any other issues related to administering the program. Generally, state staff emphasized the value of training both UI and WP staff about the program, even when WP staff delivered most or all EUC08 RES/REA services, given that the provision of services and reviews of eligibility for benefits were intertwined. Furthermore, state administrators for both UI and WP also needed to help troubleshoot issues that arose as the program was implemented and provide ongoing guidance to frontline staff. This section discusses (1) the training delivered to EUC08 RES/REA frontline staff, and (2) procedures for ongoing coordination between UI and WP.

State-level administrators developed and delivered training on the EUC08 RES/REA program to promote its uniform implementation across local areas and ensure that its operations met Federal guidelines. Administrators in seven of the study states (all except Minnesota and New Hampshire) reported having coordinated the training for their UI and WP frontline staff, which reflects both the need to prepare staff quickly to get the program operational and the high level of cross-agency coordination and collaboration expected for RES/REA program implementation. Administrators in four of these states (Arkansas, Georgia, Nebraska, and Washington) developed their corresponding pieces of initial staff training separately but jointly led the training of the frontline UI and WP staff, since staff had to be knowledgeable about all aspects of the program to coordinate and collaborate effectively. In the three states (Arkansas, Georgia, and West Virginia) that did not specifically assign responsibility for delivering EUC08 RES/REA services to either UI or WP staff, the UI and WP staff were trained on all aspects of program implementation. In Delaware, UI and WP frontline staff were trained separately, but the UI state staff helped train the WP staff on the eligibility review process.

The two remaining study states (Minnesota and New Hampshire) developed and delivered separate EUC08 RES/REA training to frontline UI and WP staff that focused on those program elements for which they would be responsible. This approach appeared to reflect more modest expectations for ongoing coordination and collaboration between these two programs. In New Hampshire, WP staff were charged with delivering the four mandatory EUC08 RES/REA services, and state-level administrators highlighted that these staff were already cross-trained on both UI and UI REA procedures. The training for WP staff focused mainly on a new manual tracking system, while training for UI staff focused on adjudication issues expected to arise specifically because of the requirements of the EUC08 RES/REA program. In Minnesota, because the UI agency assumed responsibility for all mandatory elements of the EUC08 RES/REA program, there was limited need for training of WP staff except in some AJCs where WP staff participated in the orientation for claimants.

Administrators in all our study states indicated that modeling EUC08 RES/REA services and procedures after existing programs—including WPRS and UI REA—helped mitigate the need for extensive staff training, especially when experienced WP or UI frontline staff were assigned to deliver the program services. Instead, trainings focused on modifications to existing services. (We discuss such modifications in Chapter IV.) The four states that hired temporary staff to work directly on the EUC08 RES/REA program (Massachusetts, Minnesota, Nebraska, and Washington) provided comprehensive training to these staff on both the details of the program and the full suite of services and resources available for job seekers in the state, because



staff were expected, when appropriate, to refer EUC08 claimants to additional services and resources.

State administrators reported that the extent of training on the computer systems and RES/REA program procedures to track program participation and completion of services depended on the experience of the staff implementing the EUC08 RES/REA program and the adaptations made to existing systems. Six states (Arkansas, Delaware, Georgia, Massachusetts, Nebraska, and Washington) included some training on their computer systems during their frontline staff training. Administrators in these states thought that using existing systems decreased the amount of new training needed. For example, in Washington, the frontline WP staff already knew how to use the tracking system (known as the Service Knowledge Information Exchange System, or SKIES). Hence, their systems training could focus on the new aspects of tracking EUC08 claimants using SKIES—such as the particular codes they should use to indicate exemptions from the EUC08 RES/REA program and the success or failure of claimants to complete required services. Two other study states—Minnesota and West Virginia—used the same tracking system for EUC08 RES/REA as for their regular WP or UI programs and also relied on experienced staff for EUC08 RES/REA service delivery; state staff thought that additional training of frontline staff on computer systems and tracking procedures was largely unnecessary. But, administrators in other states reported that frontline staff needed more extensive training on the computer system for their partner department; that is, frontline WP staff had to use the UI system for the first time, or vice versa. New Hampshire staff did not receive training on computer systems, since the tracking and monitoring for EUC08 RES/REA was handled manually through Excel files; how to use those files was covered as part of their overall program training.

In addition to initial guidance and training, state-level administrators reported facilitating ongoing coordination and giving guidance on issues that arose as the EUC08 RES/REA program was implemented. These staff in several study states reported holding periodic meetings to coordinate on such issues. For example, in Washington, state-level WP and UI administrators had standing weekly meetings during the first three months of implementation to monitor implementation rates and answer questions submitted by frontline staff. The state administrators reported that these meetings helped them to address questions submitted by AJC managers and frontline staff, resolve problems quickly, and maintain a list of frequently asked questions and their answers. In addition, they reported that having both WP and UI staff in the meetings helped ensure that the solutions formulated were feasible and worked well for all staff involved in the EUC08 RES/REA program.

Although the study design did not allow us to extensively assess the quality of the initial staff training and ongoing efforts to address issues that arose with the program, we did find several types of problems in the program data provided by states to DOL. We concluded that some of the data items about the program were not sufficiently reliable to be used for analysis. Therefore, it seems likely that additional initial or ongoing training and guidance specifically on program reporting would have been helpful to ensure that the state reports provided accurate and useful information for program-monitoring purposes.

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### III. ENGAGING EUC08 CLAIMANTS IN EUC08 RES/REA PROGRAM SERVICES

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When designing and implementing the EUC08 RES/REA program, state administrators needed to develop and apply procedures for managing the large number of EUC08 Tier 1 and Tier 2 claimants who were subject to program requirements specified in the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act (the “Act”) and DOL’s program guidance. This meant determining which of these claimants should be mandated to receive program services and which should be exempt. For claimants who were not exempt, states had to devise scheduling, participation, and sanction policies to encourage them to complete the services and ensure that only claimants who were meeting their obligations were receiving benefits.

In this chapter, we examine how states identified, engaged, and tracked claimants for the EUC08 RES/REA program. In Section A, we provide a sense of the potential scale of the program in study states by estimating the number of EUC08 Tier 1 and Tier 2 claimants that could have been mandated to participate in the program during its implementation period. In Section B, we describe state staff’s views on policies granting exemptions from program participation to claimants, and we present estimated exemption rates. In Section C, we describe the methods that states used to notify claimants about their need to participate, as well as how they handled claimants who requested a rescheduling of services. We also estimate the percentage of claimants in study states who were scheduled for services and, among those scheduled, who completed the four mandated services. In Section D, we discuss states’ policies for sanctioning claimants who did not complete the mandated services. Finally, in Section E, we discuss issues related to states’ tracking and reporting of data on the program. Although most of the data reported in this chapter came from interviews with state and local office staff in the nine study states, we supplement this qualitative information with state-reported quantitative data about the scale of operation for the program and rates of completion of mandated services.

We have five main findings from this chapter:

1. ***We estimate that the eight study states for which data were available (all except Washington) needed either to exempt or to call in for program services about 556,000 EUC08 Tier 1 and Tier 2 claimants.*** Because of the backlog of claimants to be served or exempted near the start of the EUC08 RES/REA program in early 2012, as well as other reasons, states’ workloads were highest in the first two quarters then declined by about half near the end of the program.
2. ***State and frontline staff viewed the mandated services as necessary and beneficial for most EUC08 claimants.*** For example, staff thought that the American Job Center (AJC) orientations would help the long-term unemployed claimants learn about AJC services that could assist them with their work search efforts, while the exposure to LMI could help the claimants to develop a realistic view of their potential future earnings. Thus, the staff valued the participation mandate while also recognizing that some claimants should be exempted. Generally, states exempted claimants from EUC08 RES/REA program services when those services would be duplicative of other services the claimants received; in some cases, claimants who were exempted from other services were still required to participate in the eligibility review.

3. ***Most study states initially contacted claimants by letter to notify them of the program participation requirement and scheduled them on a pre-specified date, time, and location for the first service.*** In their notification letters, states also underscored that failure to participate in the required services, absent justifiable cause, could make them ineligible for benefits. They often gave claimants some flexibility to reschedule services, but this flexibility was limited due to the program mandate that claimants participate in services in a timely manner and the potential that nonparticipation would raise an issue about EUC08 benefit eligibility.
4. ***Across all study states and over the duration of the program, the rate of non-exempt claimants who completed mandated services was about 85 percent.*** This rate is consistent with the view by staff that claimants were strongly motivated to comply with the participation mandate by the potential loss of EUC08 benefits. (Keep in mind that study states were selected for inclusion in the study in part because of their high participation rates relative to other states.)
5. ***Although states were, to some extent, able to adapt their existing systems to help with tracking and reporting on the program, doing so required manual procedures in some states.*** This was true especially for states that required claimants to visit an AJC more than once to complete program services. Based on our review of the data reported by states to DOL, these and other potential tracking and reporting challenges that some states reported facing were a source of many of the problems with the quality of the data.

#### **A. Potential scale of the EUC08 RES/REA program**

In this section, we describe the potential scale of operation of the EUC08 RES/REA program in study states, which we estimate as the number of EUC08 Tier 1 and Tier 2 claimants who could have been mandated by states to participate in program services. Our analysis is based on aggregate data reported by state agencies to DOL; one study state, Washington, is excluded from the analysis due to a limitation in its data.<sup>12</sup> (The data are described in more detail in Appendix A.) We examined selected data covering the full program implementation period, from the second quarter of 2012 (2012-Q2), when implementation of the EUC08 RES/REA program began, to the end of 2013 (2013-Q4), when EUC08 benefits expired.

The number of EUC08 claimants who received first Tier 1 and Tier 2 benefits in study states and thus could have been subject to the EUC08 RES/REA participation requirements during the program's implementation period was large (Table III.1). During the seven quarters in which the EUC08 RES/REA program was operational, more than 475,000 Tier 1 claimants and more than 340,000 Tier 2 claimants began receiving EUC08 benefits across the eight study states for which data are available, though some people would be counted as both a Tier 1 and a Tier 2 claimant. The numbers of new Tier 1 and Tier 2 claimants were highest in the first few quarters of the EUC08 RES/REA program. For example, during the second quarter of 2012, about 75,000 and 63,000 claimants began receiving Tier 1 and Tier 2 benefits, respectively, in these eight states. These numbers generally declined over time, but they were still substantial in the last quarters of

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<sup>12</sup> The 5159 data series for Washington showed a significantly lower number of new Tier 1 claimants than would be expected, compared to the numbers of regular UI program exhaustees receiving their last payment in the prior month or of new Tier 2 claimants.

the program. In the final quarter in which EUC08 benefits were available, about 60,000 and 41,000 claimants began receiving Tier 1 and Tier 2 benefits, respectively, in study states.

Importantly for the operation of the EUC08 RES/REA program, Federal guidance to states indicated that claimants who had participated in program services during their Tier 1 benefit collection were not subject to mandatory participation after they began collecting Tier 2 benefits. Thus, with a few exceptions, only claimants who began collecting Tier 2 benefits shortly after the Act was passed (within a window of several months) would have been required to participate in services. Thus, for analysis purposes, we assumed that claimants who had their Tier 2 first payments during or after August 2012 had participated in program services as a result of their Tier 1 benefit receipt and were not mandated to participate again in program services. After taking this assumption into account, we estimate that 556,000 claimants would have been either subject to the EUC08 RES/REA program participation mandate or exempted from it in the eight states included in the analysis (as shown in the third panel of Table III.1).

## **B. Exemptions from EUC08 RES/REA program participation**

DOL's guidance allowed states to exempt from the EUC08 RES/REA program people who had recently completed similar services or activities or who had other justifiable reasons for nonparticipation. In this section, we describe the rationales that states used when determining which reasons would lead to exemptions of claimants from program services, as well as which specific reasons were selected to warrant exemptions. This information is based on qualitative data collected during site visits to study states. We also discuss estimated rates of exemptions, which we calculated based on aggregate data reported by states to DOL.

Figure III.1 is a pictorial representation of the information in the third panel of Table III.1 that provides a sense of the potential scale of the EUC08 RES/REA program across the eight study states, and how the scale of the program evolved over the full implementation period. The bars in Figure III.1 show the estimated number of claimants per quarter in study states who, to continue receiving EUC08 benefits, needed either to participate in EUC08 RES/REA program services or to receive an exemption from the state. The estimated numbers for the first few quarters range from 95,000 to 139,000, when Tier 1 and Tier 2 claimants are both new to the EUC08 RES/REA program. However, after the point at which all Tier 2 claimants would have been subject to the participation mandate as a result of their Tier 1 benefit receipt, the estimated numbers are much lower, between 58,000 and 76,000 per calendar quarter, but still notable.

### **1. States' decisions about reasons to exempt claimants from EUC08 RES/REA participation**

During site visit interviews, state-level administrators in the study states indicated that they wanted to limit the reasons for allowable exemptions from EUC08 RES/REA program participation, because they viewed the services as necessary and beneficial for most EUC08 claimants. Both state-level UI and WP administrators viewed the mandatory program as helping to achieve three goals: (1) (re)familiarize EUC08 claimants with available job search assistance resources, (2) help them replace improves the effectiveness of their job search strategies, and (3) promote realistic expectations for reemployment. Administrators and frontline staff in several

**Table III.1. New Tier 1 and Tier 2 first payments in eight study states, by quarter<sup>a</sup>**

Quarter	Eight study states <sup>a</sup>	AR	DE	GA	MA	MN <sup>b</sup>	NE <sup>b</sup>	NH <sup>b</sup>	WA <sup>a</sup>	WV
<b>New Tier 1 first payments</b>										
2012 q2	75,712	5,054	2,548	25,093	22,953	11,220	3,561	1,968	NA	3,315
2012 q3	77,608	4,650	2,674	26,675	23,612	10,799	3,474	1,849	NA	3,875
2012 q4	68,343	4,315	2,427	25,525	17,288	10,913	2,085	1,379	NA	4,411
2013 q1	75,251	5,228	2,326	27,941	18,945	10,243	4,753	1,383	NA	4,432
2013 q2	58,106	4,354	1,772	23,856	18,938	1,205	2,760	1,226	NA	3,995
2013 q3	60,862	3,983	2,043	22,203	18,796	6,379	2,487	1,280	NA	3,691
2013 q4	59,581	3,780	1,839	22,567	17,686	6,932	2,235	1,110	NA	3,432
Total New Tier 1 First Payments (all time periods)	475,463	31,364	15,629	173,860	138,218	57,691	21,355	10,195	NA	27,151
<b>New Tier 2 first payments</b>										
2012 q2	62,918	3,314	1,915	24,270	18,836	8,384	2,769	1,105	NA	2,325
2012 q3	47,577	4,187	1,901	20,330	17,604	913	295	115	NA	2,232
2012 q4	49,868	4,167	1,739	25,193	15,751	197	12	19	NA	2,790
2013 q1	52,399	4,049	1,890	24,768	17,664	86	13	12	NA	3,917
2013 q2	46,820	3,916	1,403	22,485	16,227	61	9	8	NA	2,711
2013 q3	42,138	3,575	1,237	19,148	15,265	187	8	6	NA	2,712
2013 q4	41,269	3,282	1,283	17,997	16,177	197	1	8	NA	2,324
Total New Tier 2 First Payments (all time periods)	342,989	26,490	11,368	154,191	117,524	10,025	3,107	1,273	NA	19,011
<b>Tier 1 or Tier 2 claimants likely subject to EUC08 RES/REA program requirements<sup>c</sup></b>										
2012 q2	138,630	8,368	4,463	49,363	41,789	19,604	6,330	3,073	NA	5,640
2012 q3	95,596	6,033	3,404	33,699	30,396	11,627	3,740	1,946	NA	4,751
2012 q4	68,343	4,315	2,427	25,525	17,288	10,913	2,085	1,379	NA	4,411
2013 q1	75,251	5,228	2,326	27,941	18,945	10,243	4,753	1,383	NA	4,432
2013 q2	58,106	4,354	1,772	23,856	18,938	1,205	2,760	1,226	NA	3,995
2013 q3	60,862	3,983	2,043	22,203	18,796	6,379	2,487	1,280	NA	3,691
2013 q4	59,581	3,780	1,839	22,567	17,686	6,932	2,235	1,110	NA	3,432
Total New Tier 2 First Payments (all time periods)	556,369	36,061	18,274	205,154	163,838	66,903	24,390	11,397	NA	30,352

Source: ETA 5159 reports. Data from April 2012 to December 2013.

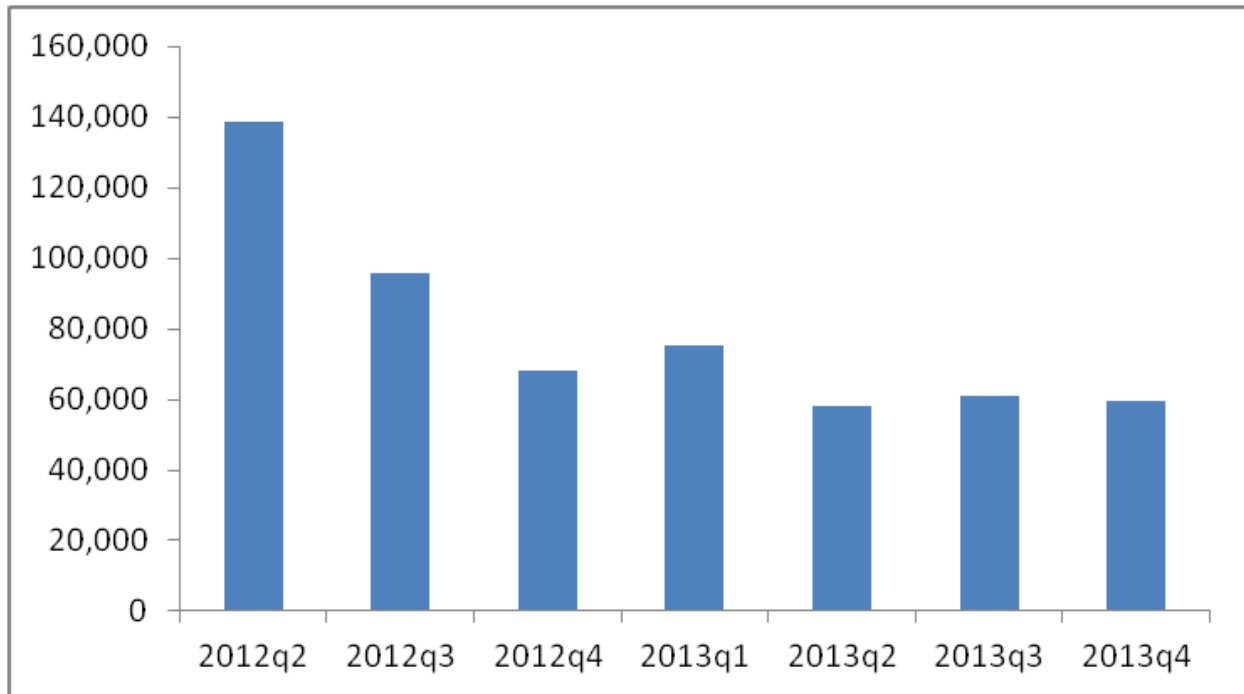
NA = not available.

<sup>a</sup> Data reported for eight of the study states. The 5159 data series for Washington showed a significantly lower number of new Tier 1 claimants than would be expected, compared to the numbers of new Tier 2 claimants and of regular UI program exhaustees receiving their last payment in the prior month. Therefore, we excluded this state from this analysis. Because the study states were purposively selected, statistics that summarize their experiences should not be interpreted to reflect any broader group of states.

<sup>b</sup> The Act, and most of the other pieces of legislation that governed the EUC08 program, made higher-level tiers of EUC08 benefits available only to states that met certain conditions related to the weakness of their economies. As a result, long-term unemployed workers in three of our nine study states (Minnesota, Nebraska, and New Hampshire) no longer qualified for EUC08 Tier 2 (and higher-level tier) benefits after June 2012. (This typically is described as the states having "triggered off" of the tiers of benefits.)

<sup>c</sup> The figures in this panel assume that claimants who received first Tier 2 payments on or after August 2012 were not mandated to participate a second time in the EUC08 RES/REA program services because they would have been required to participate in program services during their EUC08 Tier 1 claim.

**Figure III.1. Estimated number of EUC08 claimants subject to the EUC08 RES/REA participation requirement, by quarter, across eight study states<sup>a</sup>**



Source: ETA 5159 data from April 2012 to December 2013.

Note: See the text for details about how these estimates were made.

<sup>a</sup> Data for Washington are excluded. See Table III.1 for details.

states also expressed concern that the EUC08 claimants might need to exert additional effort and do some things differently in their job search strategies, given that they had limited weeks of unemployment benefits remaining. Frontline staff sometimes described the EUC08 RES/REA program as these claimants' "last chance" to change and improve their job search, as well as the workforce system's last opportunity to help them accomplish this.

Nevertheless, as Table III.2 shows, state administrators thought that there were several reasons for which exemptions from EUC08 RES/REA program services were appropriate. Administrators and frontline staff most commonly reported granting exemptions from EUC08 RES/REA participation requirements when an EUC08 claimant was a member of a union hiring hall (8 states). Seven states offered exemptions to a claimant who was waiting for a recently-obtained new job to start or was job-attached (7 states). We believe the exemption to job-attached workers arose because some states used the same set of exemptions for the EUC08 RES/REA program as they did for programs that provide services to claimants during regular UI benefit receipt, even though it is unlikely that many EUC08 RES/REA claimants were still job-attached. (In the next section, we discuss the frequency with which exemptions were given, which is different from the number of states that allowed an exemption for a particular reason.) The next most common exemption was for claimants who lived out of state (6 states).

**Table III.2. Reasons that exemptions from EUC08 RES/REA participation were granted by study states**

Reason for exemption	AR	DE	GA	MA	MN	NE	NH	WA	WV	Number of study states with exemption
Claimant is a member of a union hiring hall	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	8
Claimant is waiting for a recently-obtained new job to start or is job-attached		Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	7
Claimant lives out of state <sup>a</sup>	Yes	Yes	Yes			Yes	Yes		Yes	6
Claimant is participating in an approved training program	Yes <sup>b</sup>		Yes				Yes	Yes	Yes	5 <sup>c</sup>
Recent participation in the state's WPRS program	Yes			Yes <sup>d</sup>	Yes	Yes <sup>e</sup>	Yes			5 <sup>c</sup>
Recent participation in the state's UI REA program	NA	NA	Yes <sup>f</sup>	Yes <sup>d</sup>	Yes		Yes			4 <sup>c</sup>
Claimant lives far from an AJC	Yes (More than 50 miles)					Yes (More than 50 miles)	Yes (More than 25 miles)			3
Claimant has a disability or medical condition (developed after claim establishment)		Yes								1

Source: Interviews with state-level administrators.

Notes: AJC = American Job Center; EUC08 = Emergency Unemployment Compensation Act of 2008; NA = not applicable; UI REA = Unemployment Insurance Reemployment and Eligibility Assessment; WPRS = Worker Profiling and Reemployment Services.

<sup>a</sup> We did not learn consistent information about how states that required participation by out-of-state claimants provided those services. However, Massachusetts staff reported that the state exempted out-of-state claimants from the orientation workshop but required them to provide the documentation of their work search. The claimants also had to meet the LMI search requirements. In at least some cases, the state partnered with agencies in other states to facilitate claimants' program participation.

<sup>b</sup> In Arkansas, EUC08 claimants in an approved training program were exempt from work search requirements and skills assessment, but LMI was still provided.

<sup>c</sup> For the total number of states with an exemption, we included in the total the states that had limitations to the exemption.

<sup>d</sup> In Massachusetts, these EUC08 claimants were exempt from the orientation but were still required to attend the in-person eligibility review.

<sup>e</sup> In Nebraska, these EUC08 claimants were exempt from the orientation but were still required to attend the eligibility review.

<sup>f</sup> Georgia began its UI REA program in October 2012. After that time, claimants who participated in the UI REA program were exempt from the skills assessment but were still required to participate in the other three EUC08 RES/REA services.

Although all study states could have exempted claimants who had recently participated in the WPRS or UI REA programs from EUC08 RES/REA participation, only three of the nine study states (Arkansas, Minnesota, and New Hampshire) fully exempted all the claimants who had recently participated in the WPRS program and, when the state had one, the UI REA program (Table III.2). Three study states (Delaware, Washington, and West Virginia) required that EUC08 claimants who had recently participated in the state's WPRS program still participate in all four mandatory EUC08 RES/REA services. Of the three, Washington and West Virginia had a UI REA program at the time the EUC08 RES/REA program was established, and both required that EUC08 claimants who had recently participated in the UI REA program, also participate in the EUC08 RES/REA program if they were otherwise eligible. (Delaware did not



have a UI REA program until 2013.) Three other states (Georgia, Massachusetts, and Nebraska) exempted recent WPRS and UI REA program participants from only a subset of the required EUC08 RES/REA services. For example, Georgia claimants who had recently participated in the state's UI REA program were exempted from the individualized skills assessment but were still required to participate in the other three EUC08 RES/REA services. Georgia's WPRS participants were not exempted from any EUC08 RES/REA program services. Massachusetts exempted UI REA and WPRS participants from the orientation, which included the LMI and skills assessment services, but still required them to attend the eligibility review. In a similar way, Nebraska's WPRS participants were exempted from the EUC08 RES/REA orientation, but not the eligibility review.

The process to determine which EUC08 claimants were exempt from EUC08 RES/REA participation was automated in some states and manual in others, depending largely on system capabilities. At one extreme, Minnesota modified the UI computer system to identify mandatory and exempted EUC08 claimants. At the other extreme was New Hampshire, which handled all EUC08 RES/REA participant tracking and reporting manually; initial exemptions were similarly determined manually by staff in the state office. (As discussed further in Section III.D, New Hampshire manually handled all of its program tracking.)

Automated exemptions tended to include those that could be easily determined using administrative data (for example, out-of-state claims and claimants who had recently participated in similar services). For example, in Massachusetts, EUC08 claimants who had received a "reportable, staff-assisted service" within the past 90 days were exempted from the EUC08 RES/REA orientation (but were still required to participate in the eligibility review). Instead of receiving notification letters instructing them to schedule their EUC08 RES/REA orientation, these claimants were instructed to schedule a one-on-one eligibility review.

## **2. Estimated exemption rates from EUC08 RES/REA participation**

An examination of rates of exemption from EUC08 RES/REA program services provides a different perspective on program operations than does an examination of the reasons for the exemptions. This is because, in practice, different reasons for exemption could affect different portions of claimants within a specific state. Within a state, one reason might affect a large number of claimants, while another might affect very few. Furthermore, specific reasons for exemption differ across states. Therefore, we supplement the analysis in the previous section about the reasons for exemptions with a quantitative analysis of the percentage of claimants who could have been required to participate in EUC08 RES/REA services but who were exempted from them (in the eight study states for which we could estimate a number of EUC08 Tier 1 and Tier 2 claimants who would likely be exempted from services).

Estimated rates of exemption from EUC08 RES/REA participation requirements varied notably across the nine study states, from about 1 percent for Georgia over the full implementation period to 43 percent for New Hampshire over the same period (Figure III.2). We estimated each state's exemption rate as the number of claimants scheduled for initial EUC08 RES/REA services divided by the estimated number of new EUC08 Tier 1 or Tier 2 claimants who could have been mandated to participate in program services. The denominator reflects an adjustment to the total number of EUC08 Tier 1 and Tier 2 claimants, because claimants who

participated in program services during Tier 1 were not required to participate in services again after they began collecting Tier 2 benefits.

The observed variation in estimated exemption rates across states likely reflects various factors, though the available information is too limited to provide a definitive explanation of the sources of variation. (Site visit respondents did not uniformly know or provide information about the portion of claimants who were exempted for each of the reasons allowed by their states, and no data reported by states to DOL was available about the number of claimants affected by each exemption reason.<sup>13</sup>) One factor that could have influenced exemption rates was the scale of the UI REA program in study states, given that claimants who recently participated in UI REA services might have been exempted from EUC08 RES/REA services. As shown in Section III.C, participation in Minnesota's UI REA program was among the largest in the study states, which suggests that the program exempted a higher portion of claimants from EUC08 RES/REA program participation than other states. In contrast, Arkansas, Delaware, and Georgia did not operate UI REA programs during much of the EUC08 RES/REA program period of operation. The extent of this effect is unclear, however. DOL's guidance in Training and Employment Guidance (TEGL) No. 20-11, Change 1 (Oates 2012d), indicated that a waiver would be appropriate when a claimant participated in similar services within the past three months, and not over the course of the claimant's entire regular UI benefit period. New Hampshire staff reported that a significant portion of their claimants were exempted because they were out of state; furthermore, a significant portion of the exemptions in this state were given to claimants who were job-attached. According to Nebraska staff, these two reasons also were important in leading to the relatively high exemption rate in that state.

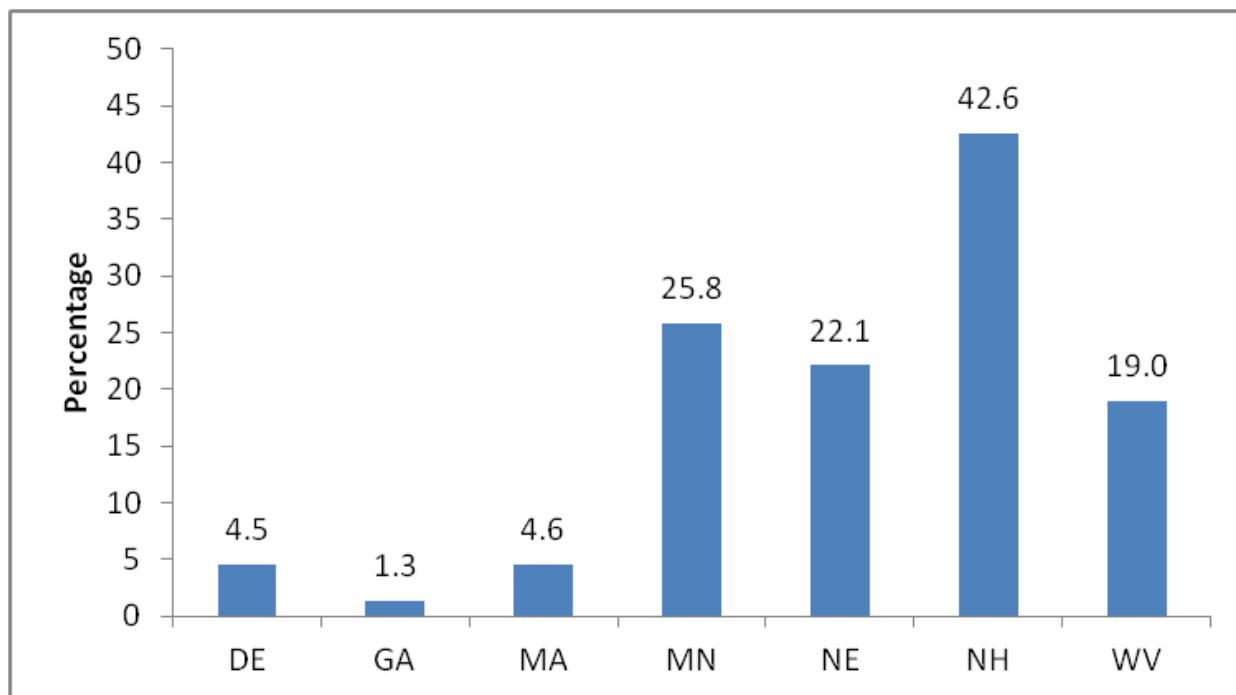
### **C. Claimant participation in program services**

Consistent with the Act and additional DOL guidance, all study states were responsible for notifying non-exempt EUC08 claimants of their EUC08 RES/REA participation requirements by the third week of their EUC08 claim and for scheduling in-person REAs to be conducted by the claimant's sixth week of the claim series. As with the discussion in the previous section about exemptions, we are able to draw upon both qualitative and quantitative data to gain insights about program participation. Through the site visits, we learned how states notified claimants of their requirement to participate and how they handled claimants who either failed to participate or asked to reschedule their initial activities. Through the aggregate data reported by states to DOL, we estimated participation rates among non-exempt claimants.

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<sup>13</sup> Although we could not estimate a reliable exemption rate for Washington given data limitations, staff in this state reported that its exemption rate for 2013 was about 18 percent. The most common reason for exemptions was that claimants were a member of union hiring hall, and the next most common reason was that the claimants were participating in an approved training program. Although the state had a large UI REA program, it did not exempt those claimants from RES/REA program participation.

**Figure III.2. Estimated rates of exemption from EUC08 RES/REA participation requirements across seven study states<sup>a</sup>**



Source: ETA 9128u and ETA 5159, data from April 2012 to December 2013.

Note: The exemption rate is defined as the complement of (1 minus) the ratio of scheduled claimants to eligible EUC08 Tier 1 claimants plus Tier 2 claimants through July 2012. As described earlier in this chapter, we assumed that Tier 2 claimants who received their Tier 2 first payments after July 2012 would already have been required to participate in the EUC08 RES/REA program as part of their Tier 1 benefit receipt and, therefore, would not have had to participate as a result of their Tier 2 benefit receipt.

<sup>a</sup>We do not report the estimated exemption rate for Arkansas and Washington. For Arkansas, inconsistencies between the 5159 and 9128u data series precluded calculation of a credible estimate. The data showed a larger number of claimants scheduled for EUC08 RES/REA program services than the estimated number of claimants who could have been required to participate in program services, after taking into account the fact that claimants who participated in services during their Tier 1 benefits receipt would not have been required to participate in services after they began collecting Tier 2 benefits. For Washington, the 5159 data series showed a significantly lower number of new Tier 1 claimants than would be expected, as compared to the numbers of regular UI program exhaustees receiving their last payment in the prior month or new Tier 2 claimants.

### 1. Claimant notification and scheduling of services

To engage EUC08 claimants in services as quickly as possible, states typically scheduled them for their first EUC08 RES/REA service. In eight of our nine study states, non-exempt EUC08 claimants were instructed in notification letters to attend an EUC08 RES/REA orientation at a specified AJC location.<sup>14</sup> The orientations were typically scheduled within a week of the notification letter's date (that is, 2-3 weeks after claimants filed for their first EUC08 Tier 1 or Tier 2 benefits), to allow adequate time for claimants to receive their notifications and make necessary arrangements to participate in the sessions.

<sup>14</sup> Two states, Washington and West Virginia, reported that the process to notify claimants of their EUC08 RES/REA responsibilities was handled by the central office state while the notification process for the UI REA program was handled by frontline staff.

Administrators in several study states highlighted that because of the large number of EUC08 claimants being called in for services, they needed to take into account AJC space limitations, staff availability, and other factors, and this sometimes made it necessary to cap the number of claimants invited to each orientation. Scheduling claimants for the orientations helped program administrators and staff more effectively manage the number of participants present at each session to take such constraints into account. Across all nine states, the notification letters also specified the documentation that the EUC08 claimants should bring with them to the orientation (which often included their job search logs) or resources they should access (for example, the state's job bank) or activities to complete (for example, on-line assessments) prior to this first activity.

One exception, Massachusetts, instructed claimants through the notification letters to call-in to select an orientation day and time at their specified location, and they needed to attend the orientation within three weeks of the date of the notification letter. This was the same process the state used to schedule claimants for UI REA program orientations. State staff set a cap on the number of people who could sign up for each specific orientation. If a claimant did not attend an orientation within 10 days of the date of the letter, they would receive a robo-call to remind them of the mandatory attendance requirement.

The wording of study states' notification letters to EUC08 claimants underscored that their failure to participate in the required services to which they were being referred, absent justifiable cause, could (in some states) or would (in other states) make them ineligible for benefits. States commonly used larger-font, bolded, or capitalized text to call attention to the mandatory nature of EUC08 RES/REA activities, as well as strong language when mentioning the penalties that might apply if the claimant failed to participate within the established time frame without justifiable cause. Administrators and staff in the study states thought that such language helped to compel participation. In Nebraska, for example, the EUC08 RES/REA notification letters explained that, to remain eligible for unemployment benefits, claimants had to take part in an in-person eligibility assessment. If they did not, they had three business days to contact the office to show good cause why they had failed to report. It was the policy of WP staff to refer all non-compliant claimants, who neither kept the scheduled appointment nor provided good cause to show why they did not, to the UI agency; based on the adjudication, the claimants might be disqualified from receiving EUC08 benefits for the week the appointment was scheduled. In Washington, the notification letters informing claimants of their required EUC08 RES/REA activities were also printed on brightly colored paper to help catch claimants' attention and elicit their response. (The sanctions that states imposed upon nonparticipating claimants are described in more detail in Section III.D.)

To help ensure that non-English-speaking EUC08 claimants were also properly notified of their EUC08 RES/REA participation and work search requirements, several states translated the notification letters into various languages. Massachusetts chose to translate only "*This document contains important information. Please have it translated immediately.*" into nine different languages and included this text on its notification letters.

The eight study states that scheduled orientations allowed EUC08 claimants some flexibility to reschedule, but they also stressed to them the importance of attending. As noted, claimants had to provide justifiable cause when asking to reschedule or missing their orientations (which would

also trigger rescheduling). During site visit interviews, frontline staff highlighted that allowable reasons could include a prescheduled job interview or a scheduling conflict with an allowable training program in which the claimant was enrolled. Rescheduling for reasons such as illness, lack of transportation, or lack of child care could raise questions about whether the claimant was in fact “able to work, available to work, and actively seeking work,” and triggered referral to the UI program for adjudication and potential loss of benefit eligibility for one or more weeks. In West Virginia, for example, frontline staff encouraged claimants who called requesting to reschedule their EUC08 RES/REA orientations to make arrangements and attend if at all possible, since their nonparticipation might have to be referred to the UI program for adjudication and could result in denial of benefits. In Delaware, claimants could reschedule only with UI staff, to help avoid confusion about what was permissible to remain eligible, even though WP staff delivered most of the program services.

After a claimant did not participate in a scheduled service, states tried to have the claimant rescheduled. States typically contacted claimants by letter, but the states varied in whether or not staff interaction with the claimant was required to reschedule the service.<sup>15</sup> In Delaware, New Hampshire, and Washington, for example, claimants who did not report for their scheduled orientations were automatically rescheduled for the next available session and notified by letter of their new date. In Minnesota, EUC08 claimants who did not attend their scheduled orientation saw a “pop-up” message the next time they logged into the UI system to file a claim for EUC08 benefits; this message offered them up to three open time slots to choose from to reschedule their orientation session. These claimants could not claim further EUC08 benefits until they rescheduled; missing an orientation session once would trigger a one-week denial of benefits, while missing an orientation session a second time would trigger an indefinite denial until the participation requirement was met. In other states, the rescheduling of missed appointments was not automated. EUC08 claimants in these states were instructed to call frontline staff to reschedule the missed appointment. Often, frontline staff sought to reschedule EUC08 claimants for the next available session, either the same or the following week—both to provide services promptly and to meet Federal guidelines for services to be completed within the first six weeks of EUC08 claim establishment.

Not every study state had a maximum number of times that they allowed EUC08 claimants to reschedule required services. Some of the study states did report limits. For example, New Hampshire and Nebraska permitted only one opportunity for claimants to reschedule. If the claimant failed to participate in the rescheduled service, the case was automatically referred to the UI program for adjudication. In Delaware and Washington, claimants were permitted two and three opportunities to reschedule, respectively, before the case was automatically referred for adjudication. Other states, such as Arkansas, Georgia, and West Virginia stressed the time limit for when claimants were required to receive the mandated services rather than a maximum number of times the claimants would be allowed to reschedule. If claimants did not receive their mandated services by the end of the sixth week of their Tier 1 or Tier 2 claim series, their cases were referred for adjudication. This was the case as well for Massachusetts, which had claimants

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<sup>15</sup> As explained in the main text, Minnesota used an automatic pop-up to notify claimants. Massachusetts used a robo-call, and Georgia supplemented a letter with an email if an email address was available.

choose from a list of possible meeting times rather than having the state or AJC assign the claimants to a meeting time.

## **2. Estimated rates of participation in program services**

Over the seven quarters that the EUC08 RES/REA program was in operation, more than 614,000 claimants were scheduled to receive initial services across the nine study states, and about 519,000 completed mandatory services (Table III.3).<sup>16,17</sup> Overall, the participation rate, calculated as the number who completed services divided by the number scheduled for them, was about 85 percent (519,275/614,491). Across the nine states, the average participation rate in the first program quarter was about 70 percent. This increased to 87 percent by the second program quarter and remained above 80 percent in each subsequent quarter. Keep in mind that the participation rate was one of several criteria we used to select states for inclusion in the study (described in Chapter I). Therefore, it is unsurprising that study states had high participation rates overall.

As Table III.3 shows, despite the high participation rate, there was considerable variation in participation rates across study states over the entire period of program operation. Two states achieved rates of more than 90 percent, three achieved rates between 80 and 90 percent, and three had rates between 70 and 80 percent. The relatively high program participation rate observed in most states may reflect the sanctions that states placed on claimants for failure to participate in the mandatory services, an approach that both frontline staff and state administrators thought compelled participation.

However, Delaware had a participation rate below 50 percent, despite having sanction policies similar to those of other study states. We do not have a definitive explanation for why Delaware's rate was low, and the staff with whom we conducted interviews were unsure as well. One possible factor is that, relative to other study states, Delaware imposed greater hurdles for the completion of services: it both (1) required claimants to make more than one trip to an AJC to complete program services, and (2) mandated additional services beyond the four required ones. (These issues are discussed further in Chapter IV.) Thus, the state's participation rate might have been lower because it was harder for claimants to complete what was required of them. Another possible factor is that, relative to other study states, Delaware encountered greater difficulty in tracking claimants and sanctioning them for nonparticipation. The state did not have a UI REA program at the time the EUC08 RES/REA program began, and its WPRS program was relatively small according to state staff. In addition, it was one of only three states that did not report having a history of close collaboration between the two agencies. For the EUC08 RES/REA program, because claimant-specific information about participation had to be emailed back and forth between UI and WP staff, the state relied on a manual process for the sharing of information about participation. Therefore, it is possible that the state's procedures to

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<sup>16</sup> According to aggregate data reported by all 53 UI jurisdictions to DOL, more than 5 million EUC08 claimants were scheduled for EUC08 RES/REA program services, and more than 3 million received such services nationwide (not shown).

<sup>17</sup> EUC08 claimants who were exempted from one or more of the four mandatory program services (but not all) mandated services were considered to have completed all mandated EUC08 RES/REA services, and hence treated as "completers", in this analysis. In addition, in those states where mandatory services were provided over two appointments, completion was recorded only once, at the time the final service was provided.

identify claimants who needed to be rescheduled or adjudicated due to nonparticipation were not as strong as those of other states, which in turn led to a lower participation rate. However, other states required that claimants make more than one trip to an AJC and participate in additional services. And, at least to some extent, other states also relied on a manual process for the tracking of claimants. Therefore, it is possible that a combination of these factors was responsible for much of the difference between Delaware and the other states.

**Table III.3. EUC08 claimants scheduled for and provided all mandatory EUC08 RES/REA services<sup>a</sup>**

Quarter	All study states <sup>a</sup>	AR	DE	GA	MA	MN	NE	NH	WA	WV
<b>EUC08 claimants scheduled for first EUC08 RES/REA service</b>										
2012 q2	118,486	11,318	2,704	42,804	29,940	6,140	4,643	1,336	16,316	3,285
2012 q3	125,315	9,216	2,962	41,834	39,158	8,707	3,138	1,102	14,737	4,461
2012 q4	77,161	8,853	2,648	25,625	17,324	7,038	2,404	1,058	8,633	3,578
2013 q1	80,568	9,338	2,935	22,135	22,913	7,116	1,918	764	9,840	3,609
2013 q2	79,685	8,520	2,281	25,310	18,001	7,534	3,074	812	10,555	3,598
2013 q3	70,503	7,829	1,802	22,507	16,743	6,950	2,036	740	8,625	3,271
2013 q4	62,773	7,317	2,121	22,216	12,264	6,169	1,782	725	7,398	2,781
Total scheduled for first EUC08 RES/REA service (all time periods)	614,491	62,391	17,453	202,431	156,343	49,654	18,995	6,537	76,104	24,583
<b>EUC08 claimants provided all mandatory EUC08 RES/REA services</b>										
2012 q2	82,644	10,368	1,367	36,686	9,144	4,638	3,393	717	13,774	2,557
2012 q3	108,970	8,467	2,009	34,479	36,777	6,809	3,365	1,069	12,496	3,499
2012 q4	72,103	6,568	1,142	26,041	19,089	5,301	2,450	1,403	7,237	2,872
2013 q1	71,804	7,573	1,144	27,628	16,340	5,662	1,812	414	8,384	2,847
2013 q2	68,162	6,492	806	25,158	14,899	5,355	2,931	801	8,852	2,868
2013 q3	57,143	6,178	667	21,830	10,809	5,320	2,039	729	6,986	2,585
2013 q4	58,449	5,757	713	21,713	14,584	4,699	1,691	662	6,328	2,302
Total provided all mandatory services (all time periods)	519,275	51,403	7,848	193,535	121,642	37,784	17,681	5,795	64,057	19,530
<b>Estimated percentage of scheduled EUC08 claimants provided all four mandatory EUC08 RES/REA services</b>										
2012 q2	69.8	91.6	50.6	85.7	30.5	75.5	73.1	53.7	84.4	77.8
2012 q3	87.0	91.9	67.8	82.4	59.7	78.2	107.2 <sup>b</sup>	97.0	84.8	78.4
2012 q4	93.4	74.2	43.1	101.6 <sup>b</sup>	110.2 <sup>b</sup>	75.3	101.9 <sup>b</sup>	132.6 <sup>b</sup>	83.8	80.3
2013 q1	89.1	81.1	39.0	124.8 <sup>b</sup>	71.3	79.6	94.5	54.2	85.2	78.9
2013 q2	85.5	76.2	35.3	99.4	82.8	71.1	95.3	98.6	83.9	79.7
2013 q3	81.1	78.9	37.0	97.0	64.6	76.5	100.1 <sup>b</sup>	98.5	81.0	79.0
2013 q4	93.1	78.7	33.6	97.7	118.9 <sup>b</sup>	76.2	94.9	91.3	85.5	82.8
Total provided all mandatory services (all time periods)	84.5	82.4	45.0	95.6	77.8	76.1	93.1	88.7	84.2	79.5

Source: ETA 9128u. Data from April 2012 to December 2013.

Notes: EUC08 = Emergency Unemployment Compensation Act of 2008; RES/REA = Reemployment Services and Reemployment Eligibility Assessment.

<sup>a</sup> Data reported for the nine states visited as part of the implementation study. Because the study states were purposively selected, statistics that summarize their experiences should not be interpreted to reflect any broader group of states.

<sup>b</sup> A participation rate in a specific quarter could exceed 100 percent because some claimants were served in a different quarter from the quarter in which they were scheduled.

Although statistics on quarterly participation rates are given for each state during EUC08 RES/REA program operation, we cannot distinguish based on the data between the several potential reasons for the fluctuations. One possibility is that claimants could have been scheduled for their first EUC08 RES/REA service in one quarter and received services in a subsequent quarter—a phenomenon that could explain why Table III.3 shows some instances in which the estimated participation rate in a given quarter for a specific state is greater than 100 percent. . This timing issue might be prominent in the quarterly statistics, given the large fluctuations in the participation rates across quarters. The timing issue should not arise for the data in the *All Periods* column of Table III.3, because that column aggregates information across calendar quarters. However, changes over quarters in claimants' actual participation rates could arise from changes in a state's operational procedures, its capacity to serve the claimants who became subject to the program participation requirement, the characteristic of claimants in the state, or other factors. For example, we know from site visit data that Massachusetts staff made an intentional decision to roll out the program slowly and carefully; this decision coupled with the timing issue mentioned above is likely an explanation for the low participation rate in the state during the first program quarter. Ultimately, we think the overall participation rate across all time periods is the metric most important for assessing participation.

Importantly, the EUC08 RES/REA program increased the number of claimants who received services, relative to the numbers that study states collectively had served in the recent past through UI REA programs (Table III.4). There are many programs, such as the WPRS, Workforce Investment Act, or WP programs, through which unemployment benefit claimants can be served, and we did not collect and analyze quantitative data about every one of them. However, to put the size of the EUC08 RES/REA program into context, we think it is useful to examine the size of the UI REA and EUC08 RES/REA programs in our study states. As shown in Table III.4, the nine study states served an average of 66,839 claimants per quarter through the EUC08 RES/REA program and an average of 32,800 per quarter through the UI REA/program. An alternate way to compare the size of the EUC08 RES/REA and the UI REA programs would be to exclude from the calculations Arkansas, Delaware, and Georgia, because they did not have full-scale UI REA programs in operation throughout the period the EUC08 RES/REA program was also operational.<sup>18</sup> Even when doing so, however, the size of the EUC08 RES/REA program in the six states that had UI REA programs since before March 2012 would be larger than that for the UI REA program: the average numbers of participants served for these two programs were 38,070 and 32,626, respectively. When interpreting these statistics, it is important to keep in mind that the EUC08 RES/REA program provided funding to serve all claimants who met the criteria for inclusion in the program, while the UI REA program provides funding to serve a specific number of claimants in each state.

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<sup>18</sup> Arkansas and Delaware did not have UI REA programs while their EUC08 RES/REA programs were operational. Georgia started a UI REA program in October 2012 and began providing services under it in March 2013.



**Table III.4. EUC08 RES/REA and UI REA program participation**

Average number of claimants per quarter:		
State <sup>a</sup>	Provided all mandatory EUC08 RES/REA services	Served in the UI REA program
Arkansas	7,343	NA <sup>b</sup>
Delaware	1,121	NA <sup>b</sup>
Georgia	27,648	174 <sup>c</sup>
Massachusetts	17,377	5,648
Minnesota	5,398	10,046
Nebraska	2,526	794
New Hampshire	828	2,198
Washington	9,151	11,949
West Virginia	2,790	1,991
All Study States	74,182	32,800

Source: ETA 9128, ETA 9128u, Bureau of Labor Statistics. Data from April 2012 to December 2013.

Notes: The average number of claimants per quarter is the average over all seven quarters (2012 q2 through 2013 q4) for each program.

EUC08 = Emergency Unemployment Compensation Act of 2008; EUC08 RES/REA = Reemployment Services and Reemployment Eligibility Assessment; NA = Not Applicable; UI REA = Unemployment Insurance Reemployment and Eligibility Assessment.

<sup>a</sup> Data reported for the nine study states.

<sup>b</sup> Arkansas and Delaware did not have a UI REA program in these years.

<sup>c</sup> Georgia data for the UI REA program are for year 2013 only because Georgia started its UI REA program in October 2012.

#### D. Sanctioning policies for nonparticipation

State administrators were supportive of the legislative mandate that if claimants were not willing to comply with their EUC08 RES/REA participation requirements, then they should not be receiving further EUC08 benefits. DOL's guidance for implementation of the program, as specified in TEGL 20-11, Change 1, indicated that the terms and conditions of state laws for sanctioning claimants who have claimed regular UI benefits apply also to claims for EUC08 benefits (Oates 2012d). Thus, there was a mix among study states in whether they used weekly or indefinite sanctions for claimants who failed to comply with either EUC08 work search or EUC08 RES/REA participation requirements. As Table III.5 shows, Washington was the only state that always issued week-to-week sanctions. Four study states always issued indefinite sanctions—that is, a stop-payment order until the claimant complied with EUC08 RES/REA participation requirements.

**Table III.5. Types of sanctions imposed for EUC08 noncompliance, by state**

Type	Arkansas	Delaware	Georgia	Massachusetts	Minnesota	Nebraska	New Hampshire	Washington	West Virginia
One week denial of claim								Yes	
Indefinite sanction for failing to report			Yes			Yes	Yes		Yes
Mixture of one-week and indefinite escalating sanctions	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes				

Source: Interviews with state staff.

The other four states used a combination of week-to-week and indefinite sanctions, typically in an escalating manner. In Delaware and Minnesota, for example, claimants who failed to attend their scheduled orientations were determined ineligible for a week of benefits and then rescheduled for the next orientation. If the claimant failed to attend a second time, an indefinite

sanction was issued. Massachusetts issued different types of sanctions based on different types of services. Claimants who failed to attend their scheduled orientations were determined ineligible for a week of benefits. Claimants who completed their orientations were required to return to the AJC for their eligibility review. Regardless of whether or not a claimant attended the orientation session, failure to attend an eligibility review meeting, which needed to occur by the sixth week of the claim series, resulted in an indefinite sanction.

In most, but not all, study states, the policies surrounding the imposition of sanctions for noncompliance under the EUC08 program were similar to those followed under the regular UI program. However, one state (Nebraska) used a policy that imposed indefinite sanctions for EUC08 RES/REA noncompliance instead of the week-to-week sanctions used in the regular UI program. When developing and applying the EUC08 RES/REA sanction policy, state administrators took into account these claimants' long-term receipt of benefits. That is, administrators thought unemployment benefit policies needed to be firm in inducing long-term benefits claimants to change their job search strategies and patterns, which had not been effective for them during regular UI benefit collection, in order to be entitled to continued unemployment benefit support.<sup>19</sup>

Frontline staff expressed views similar to those of state-level staff and indicated that, in many cases, the imposition of sanctions was effective at inducing claimants to participate in EUC08 RES/REA services. That is, claimants who failed to report for services and then had their benefits cut would promptly reach out to reschedule the missed service and begin complying with the participation requirements.

## **E. Tracking and reporting for the program**

UI and WP administrators had to ensure for program implementation and reporting purposes that EUC08 claimants' participation in the RES/REA program was effectively tracked and monitored. As discussed earlier in this chapter, steps included determining who was required to participate, or was exempt from participation, in services; calling in non-exempt claimants for mandatory services and monitoring their participation; rescheduling services when necessary; and referring eligibility issues to the UI staff for adjudication. States also needed to fulfill requirements about reporting data on the program and its participants to DOL.

### **1. Tracking claimants for program administration**

Though the EUC08 RES/REA program had new and specific reporting guidelines, state administrators were also mindful that it was temporary. At the time that states were designing and starting to implement the program in early 2012, the EUC08 program was scheduled to expire in December 2012. Not surprisingly, state administrators reported that time and resource limitations influenced their efforts to rely to the extent possible on existing administrative

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<sup>19</sup> State policies related to penalties for noncompliance were not the only policies states could use to encourage claimants to strengthen their job search efforts. As discussed in Section IV.B, New Hampshire required claimants to report a higher minimum number of weekly contacts in their job searches during EUC08 benefit receipt than during regular UI benefit receipt to comply with the work-search policy, even though the sanctions for noncompliance during regular UI and EUC08 benefit receipt were the same.

processes and systems; bypass developing new, tailored systems; and also avoid investing in expensive system modifications for the temporary program.

Administrators in all the study states except New Hampshire reported being able to adapt their current UI or WP systems to track EUC08 claimants' RES/REA participation. For example, Georgia was able to set up five "checks"—one for each of the mandatory program services plus additional "career guidance" that the state required of program participants—in its WP system as well as to create a report to help frontline staff verify that services received by EUC08 claimants were properly recorded (or to correct mistakes, if needed). Although state administrators in Nebraska relied on existing systems, they indicated that they still had to rely to some extent on manual or "patchwork" solutions to meet their EUC08 RES/REA tracking needs. Automating at least part of the necessary EUC08 RES/REA tracking in Nebraska helped reduce burden on frontline staff and facilitated oversight and problem-solving by state-level staff, who could pull reports on service completion rates or other performance measures.

An important feature of states' existing data systems, which facilitated the modifications for the EUC08 RES/REA program, was that the separate UI and WP computer systems could communicate with each other. Administrators in seven study states (all except Minnesota and New Hampshire) noted having this capability. In these states, the tasks of tracking EUC08 claimants' activities and the sharing of information between the UI and WP systems could be automated, which helped reduce staff burden and increase efficiency. This sharing across the two programs was important even when all four mandatory activities were provided by staff from the WP program, because the UI program retained responsibility for adjudicating EUC08 benefit eligibility issues either when claimants failed to participate in activities or when work search issues were identified through eligibility reviews. Minnesota's UI agency did not have a statewide need to share EUC08 RES/REA data, given the WP staff narrow role in the program.

In stark contrast to the other states, New Hampshire used a manual tracking and reporting system because its staff deemed other options as either infeasible or unwise given time and resource constraints. State-level administrators reported that the cost of implementing a customized tracking system (similar to what the state used for its UI REA program) or, alternatively, to make modifications to its UI and WP "legacy" systems would have been prohibitive. At the outset, these options were judged to be an unwise investment for a temporary program. Due to the constraints the state faced, the administrators decided to use a manual process for reporting. WP staff at each AJC in New Hampshire maintained Excel spreadsheets for their assigned non-exempt EUC08 claimants; these spreadsheets were then aggregated on a weekly basis first by an AJC manager and then at the state level for reporting purposes. The administrators acknowledged that, had they known the ultimate duration of the EUC08 RES/REA program, they might have opted to invest in a new system for all the state's UI and WP programs. But, it would still have been challenging to get a new system operational in time to meet the EUC08 RES/REA program's tracking and reporting needs.

Some states that decided to require claimants to make two trips to an AJC, rather than one only, faced challenges due to the two-trip requirement when they tracked program participation. As we discuss in Section IV.A, five study states designed their EUC08 RES/REA programs so that claimants would be required to make two trips to an AJC to fulfill their participation requirements. DOL guidance required only that the eligibility assessment be conducted in-

person. Administrators in several of these states highlighted that it was difficult to modify their existing WP or UI computer systems to handle scheduling and rescheduling, or tracking attendance, for more than one required in-person meeting. In Delaware, for example, WP staff had to email UI staff (whose computer system could track only orientation attendance) when claimants failed to report for their EUC08 RES/REA workshops, which were scheduled to occur on later dates than the AJC orientation sessions. Similarly, in Nebraska, WP staff tracked EUC08 claimants' completion of their one-on-one sessions in an Excel file and emailed UI staff completion information, because the UI computer system could not easily track scheduling and completion of both the group orientation and the one-on-one session.

## **2. Reporting program information to DOL**

Unsurprisingly, state-level administrators responsible for reporting on program participation highlighted that it was helpful to automate the necessary Federal reporting. This was true regardless of their agency affiliation. In seven study states, the UI agency assumed responsibility for Federal reporting on EUC08 RES/REA program participation, whereas WP staff were responsible in Delaware and Massachusetts. Full automation of the process was not always possible. In some states, UI staff explained that because exemptions were tracked in the UI system and EUC08 RES/REA participation in the WP system, some required reporting elements had to be calculated manually (e.g., to sum across AJCs or compute attendance rates), which made it challenging to check for inconsistencies and errors.

Although there were variations across study states in the extent to which state administrators told us of challenges reporting on the program, as well as in their strategies to overcome them, analysis and evaluation by Mathematica has determined that some of the data from reports states made to DOL is of insufficient quality to include in this analysis. As described in more detail in Appendix A, we decided not to use state aggregate data to describe the characteristics of program participants, the types of services they received, or their post-service outcomes. We also did not use the data to report quantitative information on other measures of program performance, such as rates of disqualification. Thus, taken across the nine study states as a whole, there is a question about the ultimate success of states in generating accurate and reliable data about program performance.

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## IV. DELIVERING EUC08 RES/REA PROGRAM SERVICES

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As DOL noted in its Training and Employment Guidance (TEGL) No. 20-11, , studies of innovative state-administered programs have shown that providing reemployment services to unemployed people can result in more rapid reemployment, shorter unemployment benefit claim durations, and fewer erroneous payments (Oates 2012b). Consistent with these findings, TEGL 20-11 explained that the EUC08 RES/REA program requirements called for claimants to receive (1) an orientation to the AJCs and the resources made available through these centers, (2) individual skills assessments, (3) labor market and career information, and (4) a review of their eligibility for EUC08 benefits based on their work search activities (Oates 2012b). States were given flexibility in how they delivered the first three of these services but were required to conduct the eligibility reviews in-person. States had the discretion to offer or require that claimants participate in other services (for example, career counseling or referrals to training).

As state administrators set up their EUC08 RES/REA program, they had to make choices about the content, structure, and delivery approach both for individual program services and for their overall programs. They had to decide, for example, whether to deliver services other than the eligibility reviews in person, over the telephone, or virtually (electronically); whether and how to bundle the required activities; and whether to offer or require participation in additional services. If the services were to be delivered in person, administrators also had to consider where to do so, given that some AJCs did not have sufficient meeting room capacity to accommodate the large number of claimants to be served in a short period of time. In making these decisions, DOL guidance encouraged states to build off their existing services and procedures for other similar programs—most notably the WPRS program (which provides mandatory services for those deemed likely to exhaust their regular UI benefit entitlements) and the UI REA program (which operates in the majority of states and delivers a similar group of services). DOL guidance also encouraged states to adapt existing approaches to take into account the specific needs of the long-term unemployed claimants (and requirements of the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act [the “Act”]). Furthermore, states had to take into account other factors, such as the temporary nature of the program, as well as limited staffing, space, and fiscal resources.

This chapter describes how the nine study states designed and delivered the four mandatory EUC08 RES/REA program services and additional services that they integrated into their programs and routinely offered to, or made mandatory for, claimants. First, we discuss the general approaches that states used to operate their programs—that is, whether most services were delivered in-person or virtually and the number of required in-person sessions for most claimants—and the considerations that influenced these choices (Section A). Next, we describe states’ specific choices for delivering the four mandatory services (Section B). Last, we discuss additional services or resources that the nine study states required or recommended for claimants, and how these were integrated into the programs (Section C).

Several findings emerge from this chapter:

- ***Despite the flexibility given to states, the nine study states mostly relied on in-person introduction to and provision of the four mandatory EUC08 RES/REA program activities.***

Administrators and frontline staff preferred in-person service delivery because they thought it helped claimants to engage more strongly with the workforce system.

- ***Study states were about evenly split in how they chose to bundle required program activities, with four allowing claimants to complete all mandated services in a single AJC visit and five requiring claimants to make two AJC visits.*** Staff in the first group of states emphasized a desire to streamline service delivery and avoid the burden of requiring claimants to make more than one in-person visit to the AJCs. Staff in the second group of states emphasized the values of requiring claimants to visit an AJC more than once and efficiencies associated with scheduling different types of activities (such as group sessions versus one-on-one meetings) on different dates. Administrators in both groups of states were mindful of resource constraints and aimed to minimize undue burden for claimants and frontline staff.
- ***In most study states, the orientation to AJC services included an introduction to assessments and LMI resources.*** Claimants were directed to complete assessments on their own and the states relied on self-attestation of assessment completion. All study states also directed claimants to more than one source of LMI, which—by and large—claimants also needed to work through on their own.
- ***For the EUC08 RES/REA program eligibility reviews, most states used the work search standards for the regular UI program, such as the minimum weekly number of contacts with employers, to assess work search effort.*** Administrators in three states said that they would have liked to impose more stringent work search standards for EUC08 claimants, but only New Hampshire was able to do so formally.
- ***Study states engaged claimants in a number of additional services beyond the four mandatory program activities.*** Some of the additional activities that were required of or offered to claimants were resume reviews (4 states), work readiness certification (3 states), or individualized service or career plans (2 states).

### **A. General approaches to the delivery of RES/REA services**

State-level administrators and frontline staff alike strongly preferred in-person delivery of EUC08 RES/REA services, over telephone or electronic delivery, when possible given resource constraints. They offered several reasons why, in their view, it was important to bring claimants into the AJCs for services. First, they viewed in-person reporting as helping to reduce claimants' isolation from society. State-level administrators in Massachusetts, for example, noted that EUC08 claimants who had been out of work for a long time were more likely to exhibit signs of depression and anxiety. Frontline staff in Nebraska and New Hampshire similarly reported that they often met claimants who were very discouraged or frustrated after months of searching unsuccessfully for a new job. These staff felt that having the claimants come to the AJCs for in-person sessions with other claimants helped them realize that they were not alone in their experiences and receive encouragement, not only from AJC staff but also from each other.

Requiring in-person participation in EUC08 RES/REA program services was also viewed as valuable in the study states where most UI claims-filing is done by telephone or over the Internet—such as Minnesota and Nebraska—since many claimants had not “set foot” in an AJC before being called in for their mandatory program activities. (Although some programs, such as

the WPRS and UI REA programs, require that regular UI claimants visit an AJC for continued benefit eligibility, these programs serve only a subset of UI claimants.) Administrators and frontline staff in these states noted that the in-person sessions introduced the claimants to the range of resources and services offered at the AJCs and made it more likely that these claimants would engage with these resources and/or return to the AJCs for additional services.

Frontline staff in several states offered that face-to-face meetings helped them develop stronger rapport with the claimants, as compared to similar interactions over the telephone or by email, and that this personal communication also helped them identify factors that might be contributing to claimants' reemployment difficulties. For instance, they could see claimants' body language in reaction to staff's suggestions of strategies or resources to help make the job search more effective. Staff could also offer more targeted advice after hearing details about claimants' recent job interview experiences. These staff felt that a stronger rapport with AJC staff made claimants more likely to seek additional assistance and engage in services for a longer time. However, staff also reported not being able in many cases to spend as much time with one-on-one with claimants as they thought would be helpful because of time and resource constraints.

While uniformly relying on an in-person introduction to or delivery of most or all EUC08 RES/REA program activities, study states varied in how often they required claimants to attend in-person meetings. In this regard, our nine study states took one of two approaches. Four states (Georgia, Minnesota, Washington, and West Virginia) required that claimants report to an AJC for a single in-person meeting during which they completed all their program requirements. The other five states required that they report for two in-person meetings at an AJC.<sup>20</sup>

State administrators in the states that provided all EUC08 RES/REA program services in a single visit offered two main reasons for this choice. First, these study states relied heavily on the service format for their existing WPRS and UI REA programs, which provided similar services to regular UI claimants using a single-visit format. Administrators in this first group of states used a single-visit format for their EUC08 RES/REA programs, since they thought it worked well in these other programs. Second, administrators in Minnesota and Washington noted that they took into consideration the large numbers of claimants to be served and the limited staff resources at their disposal. They considered the single-visit format to be more efficient, since it helped streamline the number of interactions between frontline staff and claimants.

In contrast, two types of benefits were cited by states that required two in-person AJC visits for EUC08 RES/REA program completion. First, administrators and staff in these study states thought that this approach fostered increased communication between the claimants and frontline staff, as well as stronger claimant engagement with AJC services. Second, some staff thought that the two-visit approach helped them better manage the large number of claimants to be

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<sup>20</sup> We have classified Delaware as a state that required two visits to an AJC even though one of these visits typically was not a visit made exclusively for the EUC08 RES/REA program. During their AJC visit to establish the EUC08 claim, claimants could fulfill the EUC08 RES/REA program requirements to watch a five-minute orientation video and meet with staff to obtain some program services. However, claimants had the option to complete these EUC08 RES/REA program activities during a separate visit. Non-exempt claimants also were required to make another visit to participate in a three- to four-hour workshop, and some claimants might have been required to make additional visits if they were mandated to participate in additional services to supplement the four ones mandated by Federal legislation.

served, since smaller groups of them could be scheduled and called into the AJCs for selected activities on different dates and times. In Massachusetts and Nebraska, for example, claimants were first called in to a group meeting, during which they fulfilled their program requirements for the AJC orientation, LMI, and assessment. After the orientations, claimants were instructed to report back to the AJCs on a later date to meet individually with WP staff for their one-on-one eligibility reviews. Requiring two visits by claimants could help frontline staff manage the workloads regardless of whether the frontline staff providing services were from the UI or the WP agency. In deciding on the number of in-person sessions to require the EUC08 RES/REA claimants to attend, state administrators reported taking into account the potential burden on claimants. In New Hampshire, for example, claimants were first called in for a 1-hour group orientation to the program and an initial review of their work search activities, and then asked to return for a second visit, which included a group workshop of the remaining program services and an additional work search review. UI and WP administrators in this state indicated that, as they were designing the program, they were mindful of the state's predominantly rural nature and the fact that many claimants would have to travel long distances to participate in the in-person meetings. However, they also put this in context by noting that claimants in rural communities would likely need to travel long distances for interviews or a job. They settled on two in-person sessions scheduled three weeks apart to allow sufficient time for claimants to make any necessary arrangements for the trips. They also aimed to maximize the information being provided at each meeting so that claimants would feel that their travel to an AJC was worth the effort.

Furthermore, it is possible that use of a one- or two-visit approach might affect the likelihood that claimants would complete services or the speed with which they completed services, although these considerations were not mentioned by staff in study states.<sup>21</sup> Initially, it might seem that providing all services to claimants during a single visit would foster both a higher completion rate for all mandated services and a faster receipt of those services. However, this might not definitively be the case in practice. Analysis of information in Table III.3 shows that average completion rate was higher in states that used a one-visit approach than in states that used a two-visit approach (83.9 percent versus 77.4 percent), but the average completion rates were similar (83.9 percent versus 85.5 percent) when the one state with a completion rate much lower than the other states is excluded from the analysis.<sup>22</sup> Thus, it is possible that other factors play at least a strong role in determining completion rates than does the number of required visits. Furthermore, the expectation that EUC08 RES/REA claimants would receive services faster with a one-visit approach is based on an assumption that states that used a two-visit approach could have provided all of the services at the time of the first visit. Due to the potential for staffing and space constraints, it might be that a two-visit approach allowed claimants to

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<sup>21</sup> DOL guidance (TEGL 20-11, Change 1) specified that states would receive reimbursement based on the number of EUC08 RES/REA claimants who completed or substantially completed services, meaning that either the services were completed and/or the failure to complete one or more of the services was addressed by the state, such as through appropriate denials or disqualifications (Oates 2012d). Thus, states would not lose the ability to be reimbursed for the provision of some EUC08 RES/REA services to a claimant if he or she did not receive all of the mandated services.

<sup>22</sup> These statistics differ from the information shown in Table III.3 for all states because of the way in which states are weighted. The calculations here weight all states equally. In contrast, Table III.3 gives greater weight to larger states, which have a larger number of claimants.



receive some services faster than would be the case if the state were to have used a one-visit approach, even if they do not receive all of the services faster. Ultimately, it is an empirical issue whether claimants would consistently get services faster through one approach or the other, and we do not have evidence about this issue or the relative effectiveness of the approaches.

## **B. Required RES/REA services**

The nine study states established processes for delivering the four mandatory EUC08 RES/REA services. Here, we explore these processes and the rationales behind them.

### **1. Orientation to AJC services**

According to TEGL 20-11, the AJC orientation, one of the four mandatory EUC08 RES/REA program services, was intended to ensure that claimants learned about the full array of services available through the AJCs and their partner organizations (Oates 2012b). A key facet of the service delivery approach in all study states was a group workshop that included this AJC orientation. This was the case even though states had flexibility to provide the AJC orientations in a group format or individually and regardless of whether states required that claimants make one or more than one visit to an AJC to complete program services. Furthermore, in all study states, the group workshop included topics to aid claimants' job search and at least one of the other mandated EUC08 RES/REA program services as well. Therefore, rather than limit our discussion in this subsection narrowly to the mandatory AJC orientation service, we provide an overview of the group orientation workshops that included both the AJC orientation and other services. Although we mention in this section the other services that were included in these workshops, we discuss them in more detail in later subsections.

Based on information we received from state administrators and frontline staff, Table IV.1 summarizes typical characteristics of the group orientation workshops delivered to EUC08 RES/REA claimants in the nine study states. These characteristics include the timing of the workshops in relation to when claimants began collecting EUC08 Tier 1 or Tier 2 benefits, the topics covered and other mandatory program activities completed, the reported length and frequency of the workshops, and the typical group size. However, these characteristics could vary across AJCs within the state and over time based on a number of factors. For example, the number of EUC08 Tier 1 or Tier 2 claimants mandated to participate in program services in a particular geographic area, as well as the availability of staff and conference room space to provide the group orientation workshops, would influence the frequency in which they were offered. In addition, the presentation style of the frontline staff leading the workshop, the number of mandated claimants in attendance, and the nature of the questions from the claimants would influence how long a session lasted. Therefore, for several of the characteristics shown in the table, we present ranges. Ultimately, the table is intended to provide general information about the group orientation workshops in the study states, but it is not intended to cover all situations.

**Table IV.1. Typical EUC08 RES/REA group orientation workshops characteristics, by state**

	Timing relative to filing of first EUC08 Tier 1 or Tier 2 claim	Topics covered during orientation workshop	Other RES/REA requirements completed during the orientation workshop	Typical orientation workshop length <sup>a</sup>	Frequency of orientation workshops at AJCs <sup>a</sup>	Typical group size <sup>a</sup>
Arkansas	Within 2 weeks	RES/REA program requirements AJC services Job search assistance Resume and job application preparation Interviewing skills AJC partner programs	Skills assessment LMI	4-6 hours	2-3 per week	10-15
Delaware <sup>b</sup>	Within 3 weeks	AJC services Job search basics Resume and job application preparation Networking Managing careers Review of work search activities	Skills assessment LMI	1.5 hours	2-3 per week	10-15
Georgia*	Within 3 weeks	RES/REA program requirements AJC services	Skills assessment LMI Eligibility review	1 hour	4-8 per week	20-25
Massachusetts	Within 3 weeks	RES/REA program requirements AJC services Job search basics Options to upgrade skills Career action plans	Skills assessment LMI	2 hours	2-3 per week	18-20
Minnesota*	Within 5 weeks	RES/REA program requirements AJC services Job search basics Networking Work search plan Fast Forward curriculum <sup>c</sup>	Skills assessment LMI Eligibility review	1-2.5 hours	Once per week	8-10
Nebraska	Within 3 weeks	RES/REA program requirements AJC services Using the labor exchange system	Skills assessment LMI	1 hour	Once per week	25-30
New Hampshire	Within 3 weeks	RES/REA program requirements AJC services Resume review Work search review	Skills assessment	1 hour	Once per week	Less than 10
Washington*	Within 3 weeks	RES/REA program requirements AJC services	Skills assessment LMI Eligibility review	2 hours	3-4 per week	20-25
West Virginia*	Within 5 weeks	AJC services Job search basics Using online job search listings Resume building	Skills assessment LMI Eligibility review	1.5-2 hours	2-3 per week	20-25

Source: Interviews with state and local staff.

Notes: AJC = American Job Center; EUC08 = Emergency Unemployment Compensation Act of 2008; LMI = Labor Market Information; RES/REA = Reemployment Services and Reemployment Eligibility Assessment.

\* States that required EUC08 RES/REA claimants to report to an AJC only once in order to complete required activities.

<sup>a</sup> The information in these columns is based partly on reports by frontline staff at the AJCs visited by the study team and may not be representative of all AJCs in a given state. The visit to an AJC in each state was intended to provide illustrative information about how the program operated and to shed light on frontline staff's perspectives about it. However, the AJCs visited were chosen primarily because of their close proximity to the state offices (that is, to be logistically convenient for the evaluators and not necessarily because they would be representative of AJCs throughout their state).

<sup>b</sup> In Delaware, staff described the orientation service requirement as covered "across two in-person sessions." During their first in-person AJC visit, when individuals filed their first EUC08 Tier I or Tier II claim, non-exempt claimants were directed to view a 5-minute video that provided a very basic introduction to the state's workforce system. They also were called in for a second, more in-depth, RES/REA orientation. Table cell entries provide relevant information for this latter workshop.

<sup>c</sup> This curriculum was offered in only some of the Minnesota AJC locations and is described in Section IV.C.

As noted above, all nine study states delivered the AJC orientation to claimants within a broader group workshop. State administrators and frontline staff highlighted that the group format facilitated serving many people at once, which was important given the large number of

claimants subject to program participation requirements as well as the required time frame for their receipt of services (that is, within six weeks of the filing of a first EUC08 Tier 1 or Tier 2 claim).

Frontline staff found that the group format fostered interaction among the EUC08 claimants. Staff in Delaware and New Hampshire reported that it facilitated informal networking and peer support among claimants. In Massachusetts and Nebraska, frontline staff stated that they sometimes observed claimants sharing information with other claimants about online resources or job search tips they had found helpful, or job leads they could not use themselves.

Administrators in two study states (Georgia and Minnesota) noted that because of the large number of EUC08 claimants to be served, they had to schedule larger group orientation workshops than they thought ideal. In their view, groups with more than 10 or 15 claimants in attendance detracted from the potential networking and information-sharing benefits of the sessions. As Table IV.1 shows, the typical group size for the workshops varied across our study states, reportedly reflecting space constraints. In five states (Georgia, Massachusetts, Nebraska, Washington, and West Virginia), frontline staff reported that the workshops typically included 15 to 30 EUC08 claimants (though more were called in), while staff in Arkansas and Delaware reported typical group sizes of between 10 and 15. Only staff in New Hampshire and Minnesota reported that the typical attendance at workshops was fewer than 10 claimants.

To help accommodate the many claimants subject to EUC08 RES/REA program participation requirements and bring them in promptly for services, most study states also hosted the orientation workshops that would meet program requirements at their AJCs several times a week. As Table IV.1 shows, respondents in five study states reported that these workshops were typically held in their AJCs between 2 and 4 times each week. Administrators and frontline staff in Georgia indicated that their AJCs hosted program orientation workshops more frequently—between 4 and 8 times a week. In Minnesota, Nebraska, and New Hampshire, they were held at most AJCs only once a week.

State administrators and frontline staff in several study states explained that, at the start of the EUC08 RES/REA program, the group orientation workshops sometimes had to be held in locations other than their AJCs to accommodate the large number of claimants required to participate immediately after the Act was passed. For example, administrators in Nebraska noted that early in the program, workshops had to be hosted in schools or other locations with meeting rooms larger than the rooms available at their AJCs. Over time, however, states were able to adjust the group size and thus the location of the workshops, as the initial backlog of claimants was reduced and as fewer claimants began collecting Tier 1 or Tier 2 benefits without having already received RES/REA or similar services. Respondents in all study states indicated that near the end of the program, around when we conducted our site visits, the orientation workshops were being conducted in their AJCs and not in other locations.

The length of EUC08 RES/REA orientation workshops varied from 1 hour to 6 hours. As Table IV.1 shows, this variation did not correspond to the number of RES/REA program requirements completed during the workshops. For instance, in the four study states where claimants were called in for only one in-person AJC visit (Georgia, Minnesota, Washington, and West Virginia) and therefore all program requirements were completed during this one visit,

reported workshop lengths ranged from 1 to 2.5 hours. In states where program requirements were completed over the course of more than one AJC visits, reported lengths ranged from 1 to 6 hours.

Study states that split EUC08 RES/REA program requirements across more than one in-person visit seemed to provide more intensive, hands-on services to their claimants during the orientation workshops, while one-visit states seemed to emphasize more prompt and efficient service delivery in the design of their RES/REA programs. For example, in Arkansas, a two-visit state where the workshops that included the AJC orientations typically lasted between 4 and 6 hours, frontline staff described speaking at length with the claimants about how to develop stronger resumes and interviewing skills, and how to present themselves most effectively during job interviews. In contrast, in West Virginia, a one-visit state where the workshops lasted between 1.5 and 2 hours, claimants received the same 45- to 60-minute group-based AJC orientation offered to all regular UI claimants—which provided information on skills assessments, LMI, and other services available at the AJCs—and then had their eligibility reviews completed during one-on-one meetings with staff that took another 45 to 60 minutes.

As we discuss in Chapter II, in most study states, EUC08 RES/REA orientation workshops were led by WP staff, sometimes with involvement by UI staff and sometimes without. (Minnesota was the exception.) State-level administrators in most study states described WP frontline staff as the “logical choice” to deliver the orientations to the AJCs, because these staff were typically responsible for providing AJC core and staff-assisted services. State administrators also highlighted that the WP frontline staff are accustomed to providing direct services, referrals to other resources, and support to unemployed workers with diverse needs. In contrast, in interactions with claimants, UI frontline staff tend to be more focused on eligibility issues and compliance with program rules and regulations.

Last, administrators in most study states reported having provided uniform slides and other materials to the frontline staff charged with delivering the orientation workshops, to help ensure that claimants throughout the state received uniform information. While LMI could be tailored to the local or regional labor market, state administrators aimed to ensure adequate and consistent coverage of the desired content. In contrast, Arkansas state administrators reported that they offered to frontline staff general guidelines on the content of the orientation workshop, but staff had discretion to emphasize different portions of the desired content as they saw fit.

## **2. Assessments of individual skills**

As part of the EUC08 RES/REA program, DOL guidance in TEGl 20-11 required that claimants participate in individualized skills assessments to focus on their skill level, aptitudes, and abilities (Oates 2012b). For instance, DOL guidance highlighted that states could direct people to the *Skills Profiler* [[www.careerinfonet.org/skills](http://www.careerinfonet.org/skills)] to inventory their skills and be matched to jobs with similar skill requirements; to *MySkillsMyFuture*, which offers personalized career suggestions based on the user’s interests and experience; to *MyNextMove*, which helps users explore career options based on their transferrable skills; or to other assessments of the state’s choice. States were given the option to conduct these assessments in person or via online tools and, importantly, to allow claimants to complete the required assessments on their own. DOL guidance required states that expected claimants to complete assessments on their own to

develop policies on how claimants should attest to having met this requirement. For instance, TEGL 20-11, Change 1, indicated that states with the capacity to track completion of online services could collect and store this information in their existing data systems, or advise claimants to print their certificates of completion for their own records and be ready to provide them to the state upon request Oates (2012d).

Four study states required completion of more than one assessment (Table IV.2), which underscores the perceived value of assessments to aid the job search efforts of claimants. These assessments covered the claimant's knowledge, interests and aptitudes, and transferable skills.

All study states reviewed the assessment requirement and available resources with non-exempt claimants during the EUC08 RES/REA orientation workshops but when and where these claimants were expected actually to complete their assessments varied. Massachusetts frontline staff directed EUC08 claimants to complete them during the EUC08 RES/REA workshop. Three other study states (Georgia, Minnesota, and New Hampshire) pointed the non-exempt EUC08 claimants to the required assessments in their notification letters and instructed them to complete the assessments on their own ahead of their orientation workshops. The five other states expected claimants to complete the assessments on their own during or after the workshops. Arkansas, Delaware, and Washington encouraged claimants to use the available AJC computers to complete their assessments after the orientation workshops. Nebraska and West Virginia introduced claimants to the assessments during their workshops and instructed them to complete the assessments, either at the AJC or on their own from home, before they met with frontline staff for their one-on-one eligibility reviews.

The time devoted to helping claimants interpret their assessment results also differed across our study states, but administrators and frontline staff in most study states generally left claimants on their own for determining what to do with the assessment results. In all study states except Massachusetts, claimants were expected to complete the assessment(s) and reflect on their results independently, although some staff reported offering assistance. For example, frontline staff in three states (Georgia, Nebraska, and Washington) indicated that they offered to review claimants' assessment results and discuss them briefly during the one-on-one meetings; the staff might use the information to provide suggestions on additional types of jobs for which the claimants might consider applying. Massachusetts staff, in contrast, helped claimants to use their assessment results to develop a detailed career plan.

Study states varied in the procedures they used to ensure that claimants completed their assessments as required by the state for the EUC08 RES/REA program (not shown). Most states relied on self-attestation by instructing the claimants to keep copies of their assessment results and be ready to produce them at their one-on-one eligibility reviews *if requested*. Minnesota and New Hampshire used online assessment tools that required a unique log-in, which enabled frontline staff to verify that the claimants had completed assessments. In Nebraska, claimants were instructed to complete the assessments between the orientation workshop and their one-on-one eligibility review with a frontline staff person, and to bring the results so that they could discuss with them with staff.

**Table IV.2. Assessments required for RES/REA claimants by study states**

State	Required assessments	Assessment type				When EUC08 RES/REA claimants were expected to complete required assessments
		Knowledge, skills inventory	Interests, aptitudes	Transferable skills	Career readiness	
Arkansas	Transferrable Occupation Relationship Quotient	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	After the orientation, at the AJCs
Delaware	Skill Set	Yes				During and after the orientation, at the AJCs
Delaware	ONET Interest Profiler		Yes	Yes		During and after the orientation, at the AJCs
Georgia	My Next Move	Yes		Yes		On their own, prior to orientation
Georgia	ONET Interest Profiler		Yes	Yes		On their own, prior to orientation
Massachusetts	Self-administered assessment	Yes	Yes			During the orientation
Minnesota	iSeek	Yes	Yes		Yes	On their own; prior to orientation
Nebraska	Kuder Skills Assessment	Yes		Yes	Yes	On their own, between orientation and one-on-one review
New Hampshire	ONET Interest Profiler		Yes	Yes		On their own, prior to orientation
Washington	My Next Move	Yes		Yes		After the orientation, at the AJCs
Washington	My Skills/My Future		Yes		Yes	After the orientation, at the AJCs
Washington	Career Infonet			Yes		After the orientation, at the AJCs
West Virginia	ONET Interest Profile		Yes	Yes		On their own, between orientation and one-on-one review
West Virginia	My Skills/My Future		Yes		Yes	On their own, between orientation and one-on-one review
West Virginia	My Next Move	Yes		Yes		On their own, between orientation and one-on-one review
West Virginia	Career Infonet			Yes		On their own, between orientation and one-on-one review

Source: Interviews with state administrators and frontline staff.

### 3. Labor market information

The provision of LMI as a required EUC08 RES/REA service was intended to assist claimants in making their occupation or career choices. As with skills assessments, DOL guidance in TEGL 20-11 specified that the LMI could be delivered in person or via online resources. States could also direct claimants to state-specific resources or to career exploration resources such as MySkillsMyFuture.org or MyNextMove.org (Oates 2012b).

All study states directed EUC08 RES/REA program claimants to state-developed websites that provide LMI. These resources typically enabled claimants to conduct tailored searches for

their region or local area. On Arkansas’s website, for example, LMI was available for specific regions of the state; the site also listed “targeted industries”: businesses experiencing growth anywhere within the state. Georgia’s website allowed claimants to search for information by county, metropolitan area, and local workforce investment area. Additional information regarding “hot jobs”—that is, occupations exhibiting fast job growth, paying above-average wages, or expected to have at least 100 job openings annually within the state—was also provided.

Study states also directed claimants to more than one source of LMI. In West Virginia, for example, in addition to the state’s LMI website, frontline staff provided claimants with a handout listing 13 other Internet-based LMI resources. These included government-sponsored websites (such as one by the Bureau of Labor Statistics showing labor market projections) as well as for-profit websites such as “Monster Jobs.” The state website identified in-demand occupations, which were defined as those with a high number of expected job openings or high projected growth.

State-level administrators and frontline staff in several states thought that providing LMI helped the claimants develop more realistic expectations about both available employment opportunities and typical salaries for their selected occupations in the local labor market. In Georgia, for example, frontline staff noted that the provision of LMI tended to be among the more contentious portions of the EUC08 RES/REA orientation workshops and one-on-one eligibility reviews, because many claimants had difficulty accepting that, in the current labor market, they might need to accept a job that paid less than what they were making before they began collecting unemployment benefits. Frontline staff added that claimants’ having up-to-date LMI could also help them to negotiate a fair salary after receiving a job offer.

Most study states introduced claimants to available sources of LMI during the EUC08 RES/REA orientation workshops (Table IV.1). In Georgia, Nebraska, and Washington, frontline staff also discussed LMI individually with claimants. Frontline staff in these states thought it preferable to review the available LMI for one or two companies that were hiring within the local area and would be relevant for the claimant (as compared to reviewing available LMI in generic terms), since it enabled them to discuss the quality of the claimant’s LMI research, as well as their background and reemployment needs.

Some frontline staff lamented nonetheless that, given the number of EUC08 RES/REA claimants to be served, they were limited in the amount of time they could spend individually with each claimant to help him or her make sense of the LMI. For this reason, in their interactions with claimants, they encouraged them to reach out if they had questions or needed additional help related to LMI or any other job-search related topic.

Notably, Massachusetts took additional steps to encourage the claimants to engage fully with the available LMI resources and to tailor their job searches or expectations based on LMI results. In the EUC08 RES/REA program orientation workshops, staff introduced six online LMI databases and demonstrated how claimants could access and use the information presented on these various websites. However, instead of stopping at just presenting these sources of LMI, staff then introduced the claimants to the “Massachusetts Labor Market Research Worksheet” and instructed them to complete it after their orientation workshops and bring it back with them

for their subsequent one-on-one meeting. The worksheet included questions about the claimant's primary occupation of interest; its salary range; whether opportunities are increasing or decreasing within the state; and how many job openings are available in the local area. Frontline staff believed that requiring claimants to complete this worksheet helped them formulate not only more realistic reemployment expectations but also stronger job search plans.

#### **4. Individual reviews of work search activities and eligibility for EUC08 benefits**

As explained in Chapter I, to be eligible for benefits, all EUC08 RES/REA claimants were required to be able to work, available for work, and actively seeking work. Moreover, TEGL-20-11 (Oates 2012b) explains that Federal legislation defined "actively seeking work" to mean that EUC08 claimants must take the following four steps:

1. Register for employment services as prescribed by the state agency
2. Engage in an active search for work that is appropriate in light of the labor market and the individual's skills and capabilities and that includes the appropriate number of employer contacts as determined or prescribed by the state
3. Maintain a record of his/her work search, including employers contacted, method of contact, and date of contact
4. When requested, provide the work search record to the state agency.

These Federal requirements for active work search applied to *all* new and continuing EUC08 recipients. However, for the claimants subject to the EUC08 RES/REA program participation mandate, compliance was to be assessed as part of the program eligibility review process. (Active work search among the larger pool of recipients of EUC08 benefits was also subject to random audits, which were not a focus of this study.)

In addition to actively searching for work and documenting their efforts to secure employment (as described above), claimants subject to the EUC08 RES/REA program mandate were required to provide the record of their work search activities to the state agency if and when requested. Such staff reviews of the claimants' records were a principal focus of the in-person eligibility reviews included in the program. Specifically, these reviews had to include a review of at least one week of the claimants' work search logs to ensure that they contained the required information.

The procedures chosen by our study states to conduct the EUC08 RES/REA program eligibility reviews were modeled closely after those used for work search and eligibility reviews under their regular UI programs. In the five study states where regular UI claimants were directed to keep hard-copy records of their work search activities, the EUC08 claimants were similarly directed to keep track of their work search activities in paper-based logs and to bring the records to the AJCs for their in-person eligibility reviews. In the four study states where claimants were required to use electronic logs to report their work search activities, the logs were adapted to capture the number of work search contacts and other information the state required for the EUC08 program.



The EUC08 RES/REA program eligibility reviews were typically conducted in a one-on-one format, which state administrators and frontline staff thought made it easier for staff to ask questions about the claimant's current situation, job search experiences to date, and work search process, and to offer individualized help linking them to potentially useful resources. State administrators in Massachusetts and West Virginia noted that these eligibility reviews also gave staff an opportunity to provide individualized counseling to these claimants. Across our study states, the eligibility reviews nevertheless varied notably in their reported duration, from as little as a few minutes to as long as an hour, depending on factors such as the claimant's needs, the quality of the work search records, and potential eligibility issues.

New Hampshire administrators explained that, like other study states, they started operating their EUC08 RES/REA program delivering eligibility reviews in one-on-one meetings, but they switched after a couple of months to a more efficient process embedded in a group format. Local office WP frontline staff reviewed claimants' work search before each of the two visits to an AJC that claimants were required to make to fulfill program requirements. Staff conducted a first review of work search activities before the orientation session—they pulled up the claimants' electronic work search logs and reviewed entries against the state's requirement for EUC08 claimants (five employer contacts per week); if they uncovered issues, after the orientation, they alerted the claimant, highlighting the intensified standards under the EUC08 program, and issued them a warning (which was documented in the state's database). This process remained the same throughout the program operation period. The state originally had the second eligibility review scheduled as a one on one meeting. However, given the large numbers of EUC08 claimants to be met, the state switched to embedding the one-on-one in-person eligibility reviews into a second group workshop facilitated by two WP staff members. One led a group activity (for instance, labor market research) or discussion (such as about effective interviewing techniques). The other called individual claimants out of the group session to review their work search activities and conduct one-on-one eligibility reviews. Reflecting on the experience, state administrators noted that it was a cost-effective approach that allowed frontline staff to see many more claimants weekly. Frontline staff noted that the group sessions also benefited the claimants by bringing them together for a second group workshop in which they had another opportunity (in addition to the orientation workshop) to network, share resources, and receive peer support from other job seekers facing similar challenges.

In other locations where the EUC08 RES/REA program eligibility reviews were conducted at the same time as the group orientation workshops, this arrangement also required participation by more than one frontline staff person. One staff person met individually with the claimants for their eligibility reviews while another led a group activity. In Washington, for example, while one staff member was leading the group orientation workshop, another reviewed the claimants' electronic work search logs and then called them out individually to conduct their eligibility reviews.

In states in which completion of the EUC08 RES/REA eligibility review (and other services) occurred during the second of two required visits, staff tried to ensure during the first visit that EUC08 claimants were prepared for the second visit. For example, Massachusetts staff started providing to claimants a checklist of the work search documentation they should bring with them because staff realized that some claimants were coming unprepared to the second meeting, which included the eligibility review. During the first visit, staff in other states also explained to

claimants what they needed to bring to the second visit, including the documentation of work search efforts. Although staff did not express concerns during our interviews with them about whether claimants were systematically not adequately searching for work, it is possible that these instructions during the first visit (such as New Hampshire's giving a warning to claimants) would have encouraged claimants who were not adhering to the requirements about work search and documentation of it to do so.

Across the nine study states, responsibility for conducting the EUC08 RES/REA program eligibility reviews was split between WP and UI staff. In four states (Massachusetts, Nebraska, New Hampshire, and Washington), these reviews were conducted by WP staff. All these states had UI REA programs and similarly had WP staff conduct eligibility reviews under them. Hence, WP staff were already knowledgeable about UI policies and procedures for eligibility reviews. Washington state administrators added that they assigned the review responsibilities to WP staff to help manage the large number of claimants to be served under the program. Arkansas and Minnesota, in contrast, had UI staff conduct the eligibility reviews. In Minnesota, state administrators noted that UI staff conducted all the UI REA reviews, and in their view, it made sense for these staff to handle this program component for the EUC08 RES/REA program. As noted in Chapter II, two study states (Georgia and West Virginia) gave AJC managers discretion about whether the reviews should be delivered by UI or WP staff.

Notably, in West Virginia, the EUC08 RES/REA program eligibility review of the work search logs was supplemented with use of an *Eligibility Review Form*. Claimants had to complete the top half, which asked about their availability to work, characteristics of the jobs they had been looking for, and any transportation or other issues affecting their job search efforts. Claimants turned in these forms at their one-on-one eligibility review meetings. Using the information in the forms as well as the claimants' work search logs, counselors assessed any issues that might affect claimants' availability for work (such as difficulty accessing reliable child care or transportation). They also, more generally, assessed potential barriers to reemployment—such as skill gaps or poor computer literacy—and, if appropriate, gave claimants referrals for additional services or resources that might help them.

For the EUC08 RES/REA program, most states chose to impose the same work search standards specified for the regular UI program. Generally, states encourage their regular UI claimants to perform an aggressive work search, but for benefit eligibility, states typically establish minimum criteria for what qualifies as adequate. Most study states followed the same work search standards as for their regular UI program, which varied across (and sometimes within) the study states (Table IV.3). Delaware and Massachusetts, for instance, required that their regular UI and EUC08 claimants make one and three job search contacts weekly, respectively. Two states (Arkansas and Minnesota) did not have an established policy across the state; rather, the number of job contacts a claimant was expected to make depended on the local labor market. Administrators and frontline staff in these states noted that, generally, AJCs in the rural areas required that claimants document fewer work-search contacts than did areas closer to urban centers. In Arkansas, claimants were required to have at least two contacts regardless of their local labor market, but they might be required to have more. In Minnesota, claimants were required to conduct certain activities specified in a work search plan, which is automatically developed when they file for benefits and then reviewed by staff during service receipt; the

activities could include employer contacts or other activities such as attending a resume workshop.

**Table IV.3. Minimum number of weekly work search contacts required for regular UI and EUC08 programs, by state<sup>a</sup>**

	Regular UI program	EUC08 program
Arkansas	2-3 job contacts; determined by local area	Same
Delaware	1 job contact	Same
Georgia	3 job contacts	Same
Massachusetts	3 job contacts	Same
Minnesota	State does not specify a required number of job contacts; requires "reasonable effort" instead	Same, but "strongly encouraged" 3 job contacts
Nebraska	2 job contacts	Same
New Hampshire	2 job contacts	5 job contacts per week, including 2 new contacts
Washington	3 job contacts	Same
West Virginia	1 job contact	Same, but "strongly encouraged" 2 job contacts

Source: Interviews with state staff.

EUC08 = Emergency Unemployment Compensation Act of 2008; UI = Unemployment Insurance.

<sup>a</sup> The information presented in this table is based on reports from interviews with state staff during our study visits. However, weekly work search requirements for the regular UI program might vary within a state, either across claimants or over time. Thus, the information presented should be interpreted as providing general contextual information but not a definitive description of states' work search requirements for the regular UI program.

Consistent with their expressed belief that EUC08 claimants could benefit from stronger work search efforts, administrators and frontline staff in two states (Minnesota and West Virginia) indicated that they would have liked to formally increase the requirements for EUC08 claimants but could not. In West Virginia, for example, state-level administrators reported that state legislation could not be modified, so they could not enforce a more intensive work search requirement for the EUC08 claimants. Frontline staff were therefore instructed to advise EUC08 claimants that they were expected to document two job contacts per week (that is, the state's desired work search standard under the EUC08 program), but these claimants could not be denied benefits if they recorded only one job contact in their logs (that is, the standard for the regular UI program).

In contrast, by passing new state legislation, New Hampshire was able to mandate more intensive work search standards for EUC08 claimants. While the state requires that regular UI claimants report two work search contacts weekly, state administrators were able through the new legislation to require that EUC08 claimants report at least 5 job contacts each week. In addition, two of these contacts had to be with new employers—that is, ones who had not been contacted during prior weeks. We did not learn from the site visits interviews why New Hampshire was successful at passing such legislation while Minnesota and West Virginia were not successful at requiring higher work search requirements of their EUC08 compared to their regular UI claimants.

### C. Linking claimants to additional services and resources

In addition to the four required EUC08 RES/REA program services, DOL encouraged states to provide additional services to assist the claimants required to participate in the program. TEGL 20-11 (Oates 2012b) suggested several possibilities:

1. Comprehensive and specialized assessments, including staff-assisted interviews and testing of educational skills and work readiness
2. Work search and career planning, including using skills assessment and testing techniques to identify the individual's transferable skills and other occupations or industries in which the skills could be used
3. Individual or group career counseling
4. Training by third-party service providers for people who need to update their skills to remain competitive in the local labor market
5. Additional staff-assisted reemployment services, such as referrals to WIA funded services, and/or referrals to additional services
6. Job search counseling and the development or review of an individual reemployment plan, which could include participation in job search activities and appropriate workshops, etc.

DOL guidance further specified that if non-exempt EUC08 claimants were referred to such services, states had the option of mandating participation as part of the RES/REA program participation. If a state chose to do so, the claimant could be sanctioned for failure to participate in the additional service(s).

Through our site visit interviews, we gleaned additional detail on the types of additional services required of or offered to EUC08 RES/REA program claimants in our study states<sup>23</sup>:

- **Resume Reviews.** Four states (Delaware, Massachusetts, Nebraska, and West Virginia) required that all claimants have a “high quality” resume, which claimants were required to produce to frontline staff for review. In Delaware and West Virginia, claimants were instructed to enter their personal data into a tool that generated a basic resume; the more information entered, the more comprehensive the resume. In Massachusetts and Nebraska, claimants were expected to develop their own resumes. Frontline staff reviewed the resumes and provided feedback to claimants on aspects that could be improved, limitations that should be addressed, and the visual presentation of information; claimants were encouraged to revise their resume based on this feedback. In discussing this added requirement, state administrators and frontline staff in these states noted that having a solid, well-written resume is necessary not only when applying for jobs but also for the online job-matching systems to effectively connect job seekers to available opportunities.
- **Service/Career Plans.** Two study states (Massachusetts and West Virginia) required that claimants develop service/career plans:

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<sup>23</sup> The 9128u report includes a data item for the number of claimants provided additional services. However, because of concerns about its quality, we do not report statistics on this data item. Appendix A has additional details.

- Massachusetts required that claimants identify skills and areas in which they would like help—for example, improving computer or interview skills, developing cover letters and a resume, or completing online applications. Claimants also completed a Career Action Plan that identified two employment goals and selected two AJC workshops they would attend. During the claimants’ eligibility reviews, frontline staff reviewed the Career Action Plans and provided additional suggestions (for example, participating in AJC workshops on “Mature Workers” or “Explaining Gaps in your Work History”).
- In West Virginia, claimants had to complete a service plan worksheet on which they indicated the additional information or supports they needed to become reemployed. For instance, they could choose options such as to learn more about basic computer skills, veteran services, or test preparation. Frontline staff then used this information during their one-on-one eligibility review meetings with claimants to develop a service/career plan, which also identified two career goals. These goals could take the form of work readiness, training, or other goals to help the claimant become reemployed.
- **Career Guidance.** Georgia required that claimants receive additional career guidance. This service was added to the EUC08 RES/REA program orientation workshops for claimants at some AJCs; at other AJCs, it was delivered during the one-on-one eligibility review meetings. As part of the career guidance requirement, claimants worked with frontline staff to review their skills assessment results and relevant LMI and to identify next steps toward reemployment.
- **Job Search Workshop.** State-level WP staff in Minnesota developed a job search curriculum, called FastForward, specifically for the EUC08 RES/REA program. It was offered as part of the program orientation workshops at some AJCs, depending on WP staff availability. The FastForward curriculum led claimants in detail through the key steps in looking for a new job. For example, claimants completed worksheets on words they could use to describe themselves and their skills, the aspects of their previous job they enjoyed the most, their social network contacts that might prove fruitful to finding a job, and their personal and professional goals.
- **Career Readiness Certification.** Three states (Arkansas, Minnesota, and West Virginia) gave claimants the option to obtain career readiness certificates through the Key Train/Work Keys assessment system. WorkKeys assesses skills in applied mathematics, reading for information, and locating information. Upon completion, claimants are assigned one of three levels of “career readiness certification”—gold, silver, or bronze.
- **Ongoing Counseling.** Arkansas was the only study state where EUC08 RES/REA program claimants in a subset of local areas were strongly encouraged to report back to the AJCs for follow-up meetings with WP staff every 2-3 weeks.<sup>24</sup> At the time of our site visit, five of the state’s 32 AJCs had full-time WP staff dedicated to the program. The claimants in these locations were assigned to one of these staff members, who worked with them in a counselor/case manager capacity. The WP staff scheduled 30-minute meetings with their assigned claimants every 2 weeks, over 10 weeks following their orientation workshops

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<sup>24</sup> State administrators and frontline staff in Arkansas indicated that claimants could not be sanctioned for failing to participate in these follow-up sessions after completing their other program activities, but the frontline staff did not highlight this distinction during their interactions with the claimants.

(that is, up to 5 additional one-on-one meetings). The meetings revisited many of the same topics covered during the program orientation workshop (Table IV.1) but with personalized attention. State administrators expressed a desire to provide this service for all program claimants but indicated that they had been unable to do so because of resource constraints.

- **Referrals to additional resources.** Frontline staff in all study states reported letting EUC08 RES/REA claimants know of additional resources or services available through the AJCs or AJC partners. Participation in such services was nevertheless left to the individual's discretion. In some cases, additional services included staff-assisted intensive services offered at the AJCs, additional workshops, or opportunities to upgrade their skills or receive other training (depending on program eligibility). Frontline staff in Nebraska, for example, noted that claimants were sometimes referred to programs like WIA, trade adjustment assistance, or veterans' services. Frontline staff were mindful that people who had experienced extended unemployment might have additional barriers to employment. Hence, they highlighted a variety of resources, including those offered through the AJCs or other private, public, and nonprofit entities. For example, claimants were sometimes referred to community action programs that offered food pantries, gas cards, or child care.

## V. PERCEIVED CHARACTERISTICS AND NEEDS OF EUC08 RES/REA CLAIMANTS

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Because the claimants who were required to participate in the EUC08 RES/REA program were long-term unemployed, DOL expected according to Training and Employment Guidance (TEGL) 20-11 that they would face significant difficulties or need intensive support and guidance to become reemployed (Oates 2012b). Therefore, important study questions pertained to the characteristics and needs of the claimants who were served by the EUC08 RES/REA program. It is also of valuable to understand how these EUC08 claimants differed from other types of unemployment benefit recipients served through other programs, such as WPRS or UI REA, so that services could be tailored to best meet claimants' needs.

This chapter is based exclusively on the information provided by state administrators and frontline staff through site visit discussions in the nine study states. It contains two sections. Section A discusses site visit respondents' perspectives on important similarities and differences between the EUC08 and the regular UI claimants, including those who were called in for WPRS or UI REA services. Section B discusses staff's (1) perceptions of the service needs of the EUC08 claimants, and (2) assessments of whether the EUC08 RES/REA program services were well suited to address those needs.<sup>25</sup> Although some states had analyzed quantitative data on the characteristics of the EUC08 claimants, much of the information we received was anecdotal and based on the experiences of staff who provided direct services to the claimants. Given concerns about the quality of the aggregate data reported by states to DOL on the characteristics of EUC08 claimants (see Chapter I and Appendix A), we do not provide descriptive statistics about the claimants. Furthermore, the study did not include an independent analysis of the effectiveness of the services in helping claimants obtain high-quality sustainable employment, so readers should keep in mind that *perceptions* of state and frontline staff are the main sources for the information presented in this chapter, including whether the services helped claimants.

The next two sections provide richer detail on the perceived characteristics and service needs of EUC08 claimants but we note here some overarching themes that emerged:

- ***Although site visit respondents generally thought that EUC08 claimants and regular UI claimants who were served through the WPRS and UI REA programs had similar backgrounds and characteristics, we frequently heard that differences in the circumstances and attitudes of the two groups affected the EUC08 claimants' service needs.*** For example, frontline staff reported that EUC08 claimants were more discouraged than regular UI claimants who were served by the WPRS or UI REA programs. They also were more likely to be passed over by employers because they had been out of work for a long time. Because they were more likely to need strong encouragement within the context of their long unemployment spells, staff exhorted them to revamp and improve their job search efforts in light of the time-limited nature of unemployment benefits and their lack of success in finding a job so far.
- ***Staff thought that the required program services were well matched to the EUC08 claimants' needs.*** For example, staff thought the services would help claimants to develop

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<sup>25</sup> Details on the EUC08 RES/REA mandated services are in Chapter IV.

more realistic expectations about job opportunities in light of the challenging labor market and to use more effective strategies to access those opportunities.

- *Staff also thought that the EUC08 claimants needed to know that sanctions would be enforced if they failed to participate in mandated services.* That is, staff thought the sanctions were both consistent with the goal of encouraging claimants to revamp and strengthen their job search efforts and effective at encouraging participation in the mandated services.

### **A. Perceived characteristics of the EUC08 claimants**

Most state administrators and frontline staff perceived that the regular UI and EUC08 claimants had many similar characteristics, such as their employment backgrounds, but that the latter faced additional challenges related to their circumstances and attitudes. According to administrators in four study states (Arkansas, Delaware, Georgia, and Minnesota), the states analyzed the characteristics of their EUC08 and regular UI claimant populations and generally did not find notable differences between the groups.<sup>26</sup> Delaware administrators found that EUC08 claimants had somewhat lower levels of education than regular UI claimants.

Some state administrators described a significant portion of EUC08 claimants were experienced workers. Nebraska staff perceived that the EUC08 claimant population comprised two distinct groups. The first consisted of relatively high-skilled, experienced workers from industries or occupations in decline in the state or in their locality. In their view, these claimants were similar to their traditional WPRS clientele; the main difference over time was that since the most recent recession, more of them needed services. The second group of EUC08 claimants consisted of younger, relatively low-skilled workers who appeared to cycle back and forth between short-term jobs and unemployment benefits. Before the recession, this group tended to get new short-term jobs before they exhausted their regular UI benefits, but after the recession, they were more likely to exhaust UI benefits (and thus qualify for EUC08 benefits and the EUC08 RES/REA program participation mandate) before finding a new job. Administrators in Delaware and New Hampshire also perceived that many EUC08 claimants were displaced workers who had long prior employment tenures and no recent experience searching for work but were not yet ready to retire.

Administrators in some study states perceived that, relative to the time period prior to the recession, the UI and EUC08 populations in recent years seemed to be made up of older, more experienced workers. In West Virginia, for example, WP administrators thought that both the regular UI and the EUC08 claimants they were currently seeing were more likely to include older people who had worked for the same company for a long time, had planned to stay until retirement, and therefore had no recent experience searching for work. However, their companies had closed since the start of the recession, and they had little idea how to find a new job.

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<sup>26</sup> Administrators did not indicate whether analysis of statistical significance between the two claimant groups had been conducted. Furthermore, we did not consistently learn when states had conducted their analyses or what source(s) of data they had used. One possibility is that states relied on unemployment benefits claims data to learn about the characteristics of EUC08 claimants, such as to plan their EUC08 RES/REA programs. Another possibility is that states used the 9002 reports for information about EUC08 RES/REA participants. Appendix A contains information about the 9002 reports.



Generally, administrators and frontline staff thought that both regular UI and EUC08 claimants—as groups—faced similar reemployment challenges. These included poor job search and interviewing skills, as well as unrealistic expectations about how long it would take them to find a new job, the type of job they might qualify for, or how much they were likely to be paid. In contrast to WPRS and UI REA claimants, the EUC08 claimants had simply not been called in for services earlier in their unemployment spells. A key perceived difference between the two claimant groups was that the EUC08 claimants might be passed over by employers as a result of their long unemployment spells. In West Virginia, for example, a WP state administrator speculated that the EUC08 claimants may have failed to get a new job soon after becoming displaced—because of poor job search or interviewing skills, obsolete skills, or other reasons—and were no longer being seriously considered by employers, who had large numbers of job applicants with similar skills but without long gaps in their work history.

A widespread view across staff was that the main difference between EUC08 and regular UI claimants lay in their attitude. Frontline staff and administrators in six study states (Massachusetts, Minnesota, Nebraska, New Hampshire, Washington, and West Virginia) perceived that claimants who were called in for EUC08 RES/REA services to be isolated from society and more discouraged than regular UI claimants who were called in for WPRS or UI REA services. For example, a staff person in Massachusetts shared the view that when unemployed workers begin collecting regular UI benefits, many are at first shocked and then angry about losing their jobs. Eventually, however, most realize that they need a plan to “get back on their feet” and hence are receptive to the offer of services after they are called in for the WPRS or UI REA programs. In contrast, staff in this state thought that by the time claimants qualified for EUC08 benefits and were called in for the EUC08 RES/REA program, many had begun to question whether they would ever find another job. WP frontline staff in study states said that many EUC08 claimants voiced unhappiness about being called in for services so late in their unemployment spell and questioned why they had not been offered the assistance earlier.<sup>27</sup> Some of these same staff noted, however, that many of these unhappy claimants changed their attitudes after participating in services, and some even thanked staff after completing their requirements, offering that the information they had received would help them in their job search. (It is important to note that we did not collect information directly from claimants to allow us to assess their satisfaction with services.)

## **B. Perceived service needs of EUC08 RES/REA program claimants**

Frontline staff and administrators in the study states thought that the required EUC08 RES/REA program services were well matched to the service needs of EUC08 claimants, especially given their circumstances and attitudes. For example, frontline staff in Nebraska noted that highly experienced EUC08 claimants with limited recent experience searching for jobs benefited from structured guidance and support around the wide range of job search assistance resources offered at the AJCs, guidance about transferrable skills and career planning, and

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<sup>27</sup> Claimants could have taken advantage of many of the services available at AJCs if they had known about them, even before they received the notice that they were required to participate in EUC08 RES/REA services to continue receiving EUC08 benefits. During our site visit interviews, we did not ask frontline staff whether or not they thought the claimants knew about AJC services prior to being called in for services. As a result, we cannot assess whether claimants' unhappiness (as perceived by frontline staff) stemmed at least in part, if not mostly, from the requirement to participate in program services rather than from the timing of the requirement.

support to update their job search and interviewing skills. Staff also thought that the low-skilled, younger workers who cycled in and out of temporary jobs could benefit from individualized assessments, reviewing relevant labor market information, and guidance about suitable employment options that would be more beneficial to them than remaining on, or frequently cycling off and on, unemployment benefits. (As discussed earlier in this chapter, we do not have an independent way to assess the views of these and other staff about the suitability of services in meeting claimants' needs.)

State administrators and frontline staff frequently expressed their views that EUC08 claimants uniformly needed encouragement and support to counter feelings of isolation from society and discouragement about their prospects. For this reason, administrators and frontline staff thought that it was important for the EUC08 RES/REA program services to have a positive and encouraging tone—even more so than other services they offer.

However, administrators and frontline staff also thought that claimants needed assistance to better understand their situations and re-energize their job search. Staff in four states (Nebraska, New Hampshire, Washington, and West Virginia) reported stressing to claimants that they would soon lose income support through the unemployment benefits system.<sup>28</sup> Because of this concern, New Hampshire frontline staff encouraged the EUC08 claimants to focus on improving their resumes and cultivating more realistic labor market expectations (for example, considering jobs that would pay less than their last ones or that were not exactly what they wanted). New Hampshire staff also emphasized to claimants the importance of finding work soon, since their eligibility for the EUC08 program would expire. Furthermore, administrators in this state highlighted that, beginning in November 2013, notices about the expiration of the EUC08 legislation were posted in the AJCs and were mentioned explicitly during the EUC08 RES/REA orientations and workshops, to further reinforce the message that unemployment benefits were time-limited and encourage them to redouble their efforts to find a new job.

At the same time, both UI and WP frontline staff thought that enforcement of the EUC08 eligibility and RES/REA participation requirements was an appropriate and uncontroversial component of the program. The view they commonly shared was that (1) the EUC08 claimants had collected unemployment benefits for a long time; (2) being available and actively searching for work was a condition of receiving EUC08 benefits; and (3) these claimants would benefit from adhering to the service requirements. Hence, frontline staff reported during the site visit interviews that they thought it constructive to refer noncompliant EUC08 claimants to UI staff for adjudication of potential availability or other issues, and that they did so when claimants' situations warranted it.

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<sup>28</sup> During much of the time period in which EUC08 benefits were available (mid-2008 through the end of 2013), additional weeks of unemployment benefits were available to long-term unemployed workers through the Extended Benefits (EB) program. Almost all states provided EUC08 benefits before they provided EB. However, with the exception of Alaska, no UI jurisdiction was eligible for EB during 2013.

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## **VI. FINDINGS AND LESSONS LEARNED**

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This study of the implementation of the EUC08 RES/REA program in nine selected states yielded important findings, lessons learned, and other insights about providing reemployment services to long-term unemployed job seekers and enforcing the eligibility requirements for Federal unemployment benefits. In this chapter, we highlight them by tying together the details from earlier chapters about how the study states designed and implemented the program and whom they served. We have grouped the findings, lessons, and insights into those related to (1) staff support for the EUC08 RES/REA program; (2) service delivery methods and work search requirements; and (3) additional implications for designing, implementing, and assessing future programs.

The study findings and lessons are based primarily on the experiences and perspectives of state and frontline staff interviewed in the study states. We obtained the information during one round of interviews with state staff and a subset of frontline staff at one AJC in each of the nine study states. Although we strove to assure these staff that they could answer our questions with openness and candor, we cannot ascertain whether or to what extent they did so. It is possible that they felt reluctant to share perspectives that are contrary to official state or federal policy, or that they perceived to be sensitive in nature. Furthermore, the nine states were purposively selected for inclusion in the study because they were perceived by DOL staff or through our analysis of aggregate data to have done especially good jobs of implementing the program. Nevertheless, as discussed in Chapter I, other research has documented challenges that states, nationwide, had in implementing the program (Wandner 2013). Ultimately, we do not have evidence about whether the perspectives of the interviewed staff in the nine study states are similar to or different from the perspectives of other staff in those states or staff in states for which we did not conduct interviews.

Furthermore, we caution that we did not conduct an evaluation of whether claimants' participation in program services led to better reemployment outcomes. Thus, we do not have an objective measure of the extent to which the program benefited claimants. Nevertheless, the themes and lessons described here have the potential to be of value to DOL and policymakers as they both look back on the EUC08 RES/REA implementation experience and look forward to developing and refining other initiatives for helping unemployment benefit claimants return to work and for ensuring the integrity of the unemployment benefits system.

### **A. Staff support for the EUC08 RES/REA program**

The core elements of the EUC08 RES/REA program—the four required program components and the mandate that receipt of EUC08 benefits be contingent upon satisfactory participation—were generally supported by both state and frontline staff in study states. In this section, we provide an overarching perspective about these two central features of the program. We also point out steps that some study states were taking, or contemplating, to improve their service delivery and claimant engagement in other similar programs in light of their experiences with the EUC08 RES/REA program after it ended.

***Across study states, state and frontline staff expressed views that the four required program components were important tools in helping long-term unemployed workers achieve reemployment.*** We frequently heard from state and frontline staff that EUC08 claimants needed to participate in the three reemployment services because doing so would improve the effectiveness of their job search approach and techniques. Staff thought that (1) the group orientation workshops helped claimants to become aware of the reemployment service assistance they could receive; (2) the assessments helped them identify their skill levels, aptitudes, and abilities; and (3) LMI helped them adjust their expectations about the availability of jobs in specific occupations and what wages those jobs offered. This could be considered especially important given the challenging nature of the job market.

Furthermore, both state and frontline staff thought it constructive and uncontroversial to have the eligibility review as the fourth component in the EUC08 RES/REA package. They expressed the views that eligibility for EUC08 benefits required claimants to engage in an active work search (as well as be able and available to work) and that claimants who did not do so should not be receiving benefits. Furthermore, staff in three of the nine study states reported wanting to increase the minimum number of employer contacts per week that EUC08 claimants were required to make to satisfy the EUC08 work search condition, relative to the minimum number required during regular UI benefit collection. They thought that doing so would encourage these claimants to intensify their job search efforts. However, only one of these states was able to formally do so.

Although there was uniform support by state and frontline staff in the value of the four mandatory components of the EUC08 RES/REA program, we did not encounter uniform views about the value of mandating participation in additional services. Some states did mandate more services, while others did not. It is likely that unique aspects of the EUC08 RES/REA program—such as the speed with which states had to start providing services after the authorizing legislation mandated was enacted or the large number of claimants to be served given the weaknesses in the labor market and the size of the EUC08 program—hindered some states' consideration of the value of mandating additional services. It is possible that more states might have mandated participation in more services had circumstances been different. But, we cannot assess this possibility given the information that we obtained.

***State and frontline staff thought that the threat of sanctions for nonparticipation in EUC08 RES/REA program activities was effective and constructive.*** Staff thought the threat of loss of EUC08 benefits was effective at engaging claimants and reinforcing the message that claimants needed to revamp their job search strategies. Although (as noted above) we cannot ascertain the extent to which staff might have been reluctant to share some of their opinions with us, it is striking that no interview respondent—from either the UI or the WP agency—expressed a view that the sanctions for nonparticipation in the EUC08 RES/REA program were too tough. Instead, frontline staff perceived that most claimants who had their benefits cut for nonparticipation would promptly reach out to reschedule the missed service and begin complying with the participation requirements.

***At the time of the site visits, staff in several states were considering or implementing changes in their ongoing UI and reemployment service programs as a result of their positive experiences implementing the EUC08 RES/REA program.*** Study site visits were conducted in

December 2013 and January 2014, around the time the EUC08 RES/REA program ended. Thus, some of the state staff we interviewed were likely only at the very early stages of thinking about, and planning for, initiatives to come after the program. Nevertheless, we heard examples of how some states were incorporating, into their other reemployment programs, some of the insights they gained through the EUC08 RES/REA program. For example, Delaware staff reported that before the EUC08 RES/REA program, the state had been interested in the UI REA grant program but felt unprepared to develop either a grant proposal or content for a strong program. However, their positive experience with the EUC08 RES/REA program led them to apply for, and receive, a regular UI REA grant. Staff in some of the other study states also reported that their EUC08 RES/REA program experiences led them to reconsider how they provide, on an ongoing basis, reemployment services. These changes could be focused on narrow issues, such as how West Virginia began using an automated method to call in claimants for UI REA services or how New Hampshire shifted from providing some services one on one to providing them in a group format.

The changes could also be broad. At the time of our site visit to Nebraska, for example, state staff reported they were moving forward with plans to implement a new program, NE-RES, that would potentially make services similar to those in the EUC08 RES/REA program available to any customer of the state's workforce system and mandatory for some or most UI claimants. As noted above, the timing of our site visits kept us from learning much about the specific plans of these states. Nevertheless, it was clear that the staff in these and some of the other study states saw sufficient value in the goals, package of services, and general approach of the EUC08 RES/REA program to try to incorporate its strengths into the broader array of ongoing reemployment services offered to unemployment benefits claimants and other job seekers.

## **B. Service delivery methods and work search requirements**

In addition to the findings and lessons about core features of the EUC08 RES/REA program, we identified several findings and implications about the delivery of services and requirements for work search, related to (1) the number of times claimants needed to visit an AJC to complete the required services, (2) the method of service delivery—group versus in-person, (3) the potential value of requiring active claimant engagement with information obtained during service receipt, and (4) the standards for adequate work search. We discuss these findings and implications in this section.

*States split roughly evenly on whether they required EUC08 claimants to make one or two visits to an AJC to complete program requirements.* Of the nine study states, four structured their programs to allow claimants to complete all mandatory services during one visit. Staff in these states thought this approach worked well in their similar programs, such as UI REA and WPRS. An important justification was that it kept the number of interactions between frontline staff and claimants low. In contrast, five study states required that claimants make more than one visit to an AJC to fulfill their program requirements, even though their similar programs required only one visit. However, two advantages to this approach were given. First, staff thought that claimants were more likely to use AJC services, or use them more extensively, as a result of two visits. Second, the two-trip approach allowed the state to better manage the time of frontline staff—for example, by having them serve a large number of claimants through a group orientation workshop on one day and a smaller number of claimants through one-on-one

meetings on other days. An additional advantage we noticed when assessing the service delivery approaches of all study states was that, relative to states that required one visit, states that used a two-visit approach tended to have a longer—and possibly more in-depth—group workshops. However, we also heard of a drawback of the two-visit approach: frontline staff in some two-visit states needed to rely on more manual procedures for the tracking of claimants' participation in services because the states' computer systems were not set up to allow a two-part service completion process. We cannot assess which approach, in fact, was more efficient for staff or more effective at engaging claimants in services. Nevertheless, the roughly even split of states across these two approaches highlights the important interplay between claimant engagement in services and the efficiency of service delivery from an organizational or staffing perspective.

***Staff perceived that EUC08 claimants benefited from interactions with other long-term unemployed claimants through a group service format.*** In contrast to workers who had been without work for a relatively short time, staff perceived that EUC08 claimants felt more isolated from society, discouraged, and depressed given their unsuccessful, but lengthy, job search efforts. Thus, although group service provision is not new, staff perceived that the orientation workshops and other group-based services were especially valuable in helping EUC08 claimants recognize that other people faced similar challenges. Through group services, claimants were able to encourage each other, network, and occasionally share leads for jobs. The provision of some of the services in a group format also might have been especially helpful so that staff could serve in a timely way the claimants who were part of this mandatory, large-scale program. The distinctive needs of this target population and this type of program might lead a state to decide to provide services in a group format even if it prefers one-on-one service provision in many other circumstances.

***Strategies that require claimants to apply information from reemployment services to their own situations might help to improve outcomes.*** As discussed earlier in this report, states needed to develop their EUC08 RES/REA programs in a way that allowed them to serve large numbers of claimants in a short period of time and with limited resources. During the program orientation workshop, frontline staff introduced claimants to skills assessments and LMI (and claimants' responsibility to meet the requirements related to those services). But in most cases, staff thought it was infeasible to spend much time one-on-one with each claimant to ensure that he or she understood and could make full use of the results from the assessments and the LMI; although some frontline staff encouraged claimants to request assistance if they had difficulty interpreting results, the claimants were largely left on their own to determine whether or how to use the results. In contrast, Massachusetts's program required that claimants use their assessment and LMI results to develop detailed career plans. The state's frontline staff believed that imposing these requirements helped claimants engage more actively with the information, and formulate not only more realistic reemployment expectations but also stronger job search plans.

***A reexamination of how adequate work search is defined might be warranted.*** Most of the study states used a minimum number of work search contacts, such as two or three, to determine whether or not EUC08 RES/REA claimants met the requirements for adequate work search. The minimum was typically based on the UI program requirements and, in some cases, allowed contacts with employers who had already been contacted by the claimant to count towards the requirement. Generally speaking, this approach for defining adequate work search is widespread across all states and has been long-standing over many years. (Other criteria also are used to

ensure that the claimants meet all of the requirements for benefit eligibility.) However, two related themes about work search emerged from the study and suggest a potential value in reassessing what constitutes adequate work search in light of today's labor market. The first, which is already discussed in Section A, is the interest by some states to increase the minimum number of required weekly work search contacts for EUC08 claimants. Although this study focused on long-term unemployed claimants, policymakers might want to consider the benefits of increasing the minimum standard for adequate work search early in claimants' UI benefit spells. Although we do not have direct evidence to assess the merits of this idea, it is possible that increasing the standards might help claimants avoid becoming long-term unemployed. This could be especially important in light of a recent trend for some states to reduce the number of potential weeks of UI benefits to which claimants are entitled, as well as high rates of long-term unemployment in recent years.

A second theme, also discussed in Section A and based on staff views in all study states, is that many staff thought that the quality of work search done by many of the EUC08 RES/REA claimants could be improved. This appeared to be the view regardless of whether the claimants were meeting the required minimum number of weekly contacts. It is unsurprising to find that state and frontline staff who provide reemployment services think that jobseekers can benefit from these services. But, it seems reasonable to speculate that claimants who cannot present themselves well to an employer will face challenges regardless of the number of employer contacts they have, especially in a tough labor market. For example, claimants need to be able both to submit a strong resume when one is required by the employer and to complete an interview in a professional manner. More generally, they need to know how to find appropriate jobs to apply for through the use of current methods and technology—which might differ dramatically from standard practices during their most recent prior job search—and to have realistic expectations about what an appropriate salary or wage rate is. Hence, the quality of work search, although hard to assess, can be an important consideration for success in addition to the quantity of employer contacts.

In conjunction with recent trends in technology and methods for work search, the labor market, and UI benefit durations, these themes might suggest a value in revisiting whether the long-standing approach to defining adequate work search is still appropriate. Importantly, our study was not intended to generate prescriptive recommendations for revamping work search standards or other details of the UI program. A formal undertaking to review current practices and formulate recommendations about changes would need to take into account many issues that were outside of the scope of this study, such as the disparate backgrounds and employment aspirations of claimants, legislative concerns, enforcement mechanisms, and funding. Nonetheless, it might be a worthwhile undertaking if it helps claimants avoid long-term unemployment during both healthy and weak labor markets.

### **C. Additional implications of the EUC08 RES/REA program experiences for designing, implementing, and assessing future programs**

In this section, we discuss four additional implications of the EUC08 RES/REA program experiences in our nine study states for the design, implementation, and assessment of future programs. The first pertains to the timing of a requirement to participate in mandatory reemployment services. The second pertains to a need to improve the quality of aggregate data

collected for program-monitoring purposes. The third pertains to the importance of other factors besides the package of reemployment services for successful program implementation. The fourth pertains to a need to recognize that a large-scale, time-sensitive, mandatory program such as the EUC08 RES/REA program might lead at least some states to make short-term sacrifices in their other programs.

***A mandate for most or all claimants to participate in reemployment services earlier in their unemployment periods might be more effective than one that waits until claimants are long-term unemployed.*** State and frontline staff in several states thought that it might be better to impose required activities before claimants become long-term unemployed. They gave three reasons for this view. First, they thought that earlier service provision would strengthen the effectiveness of claimants' work search and reduce the likelihood that they would develop poor work search habits or attitudes not conducive to finding a job. Second, they thought that as a result of earlier receipt of services and the resulting faster reemployment, claimants could avoid having employers look upon them unfavorably because they had gone so long without work. Third, earlier service delivery would allow some claimants to take advantage of reemployment strategies—such as training—that become less viable as claimants' length of time unemployed increases and their remaining time receiving unemployment benefits decreases.

Because some study state staff recommended that services be provided earlier than was done for the EUC08 RES/REA program, questions arise about how much earlier is appropriate and whether almost all claimants should be required to participate. The WPRS and UI REA programs typically provide services early in the regular UI claim series—often between a few weeks and the end of the second month of benefit collection, given the time required to identify claimants for the programs and schedule their participation in services. Research indicates that states' use of WPRS models helps with the identification of claimants likely to exhaust benefits (Sullivan et al. 2007), and other research on the UI REA program indicates that it was effective in three of four study states at reducing benefit receipt and exhaustion rates (Poe-Yamagata et al. 2011). However, both the WPRS and the UI REA program serve only a relatively small portion of all claimants who are not intentionally exempted from the services (such as claimants with definite recall dates). Staff in two study states recommended reaching out to claimants around the 12th week of the regular UI claim, or a week or two earlier or later. Staff in one of these states, Nebraska, thought it desirable to provide a comprehensive intervention for almost all UI claimants at a point later than for the WPRS and UI REA programs but earlier than for the EUC08 RES/REA program; they had been developing plans for this type of program at the time of our site visit. As with the WPRS and UI REA programs, this type of early intervention has the potential to help claimants take advantage of AJC services, develop strong work search skills, and attain faster reemployment early in their unemployment claim series. In essence, to the extent that claimants are receptive to these services early in their UI claim spells, we think it makes sense to provide these services as quickly as possible to them. However, the information collected for this study does not provide much concrete evidence about whether claimants are receptive to services at this point and, more generally, when during the UI claim spell is the best time to provide services such as those mandated in the EUC08 RES/REA program. Nevertheless, continued efforts by DOL and the states to assess and improve upon the current programs that provide services to claimants early or in the middle of their regular UI claim spells seem warranted.



***We recommend that additional effort be made to ensure that data collected and reported for program monitoring purposes are of high quality.*** States were required as part of the EUC08 RES/REA program to complete two program-specific reports that could be used for program monitoring. One was focused on core metrics of the program, such as the numbers of claimants who were scheduled for program services, completed program services, or were disqualified from benefits because of search issues. The other pertained to the characteristics of participants (such as their age and gender), the types of services they received (such as career guidance and job search activities), and their outcomes after they exited from the program (such as their entered employment rate and retention in employment). We learned from site visit respondents that study states varied in the level of ease or difficulty they had when implementing procedures for generating the data for these reports, especially given the urgency for them to begin providing program services quickly and the temporary nature of the program. From our analysis of the data for research purposes, it appears there were inconsistencies across states in the quality of their data—a finding that led us to significantly restrict our use of the data. Although the goals of a research analysis and its resulting demands on data are different from the goals of data for program-monitoring purposes, it is reasonable to expect that the reports should provide accurate and useful information for either purpose.

Therefore, we recommend that additional effort be made to foster quality in similar types of data for future programs so that there can be confidence that the data consistently and accurately measure the desired information across all states. For example, this could include additional technical assistance to states so their procedures for ensuring that the participant- or claimant-level data upon which the aggregate data are based are strong. It could also be that further efforts to cross-check the reported data against external benchmarks would be useful so that problems in the development of the data are detected and corrected quickly. Ultimately, the goal of these types of efforts would be to ensure that the data are more useful for their primary purpose of program monitoring, as well as secondary purposes such as research about the program and its participants.

***Other factors besides the presence of a similar program (such as the UI REA program) might be especially important for influencing the ease and ultimate success of implementation of a new program that combines reemployment services and eligibility assessments.*** An important asset working to the benefit of the nine study states to facilitate implementation of the EUC08 RES/REA program was that they had similar programs in place for use as a starting point as they developed EUC08 RES/REA program services and procedures. All states are required to have a WPRS program, and six of the nine study states initially had in place a UI REA program when they were developing their EUC08 RES/REA programs. We intentionally included in the study some states that did not have a UI REA program, so we could compare whether states without a UI REA program had different implementation experiences from states with a UI REA program. Given that this study focused on the experiences of nine purposively-selected states judged to have been relatively successful at implementing the EUC08 RES/REA program, it is noteworthy in and of itself that we could include in our study several states without a UI REA program; that is, having a UI REA program initially was not essential for the successful implementation of the EUC08 RES/REA program. Furthermore, based on the information provided to us during the site visit interviews, it did not appear that the three study states without an initial UI REA program consistently faced greater challenges implementing the EUC08 RES/REA program because these states could still draw upon their WPRS practices and procedures. (One state,

Arkansas, also reported drawing upon resources available through state workforce consortia.) While learning in depth about states' challenges was not a goal of this study (which focused on relatively successful states), the large scale of the EUC08 RES/REA program and the speed with which it had to be implemented appeared to be more important challenges faced by all study states.

***In a few study states, successful implementation of the EUC08 RES/REA program might have come about in part at the expense of other programs.*** According to state and frontline staff in some study states, the demands of the EUC08 RES/REA program led to the de-emphasis of some of the activities of other reemployment service programs. For example, staff in one state reported supplementing the EUC08 RES/REA program funds with funds from the WP program because the former funds were inadequate. To ensure it would be able to serve the number of expected EUC08 claimants, another state chose to divert staff from the UI REA program rather than hire new, temporary staff. (It was not clear at the time that the state would be able to meet its UI REA program target for number of claimants served, although it did eventually do so.) Ultimately, any assessment of the effects of the EUC08 RES/REA program and states' successes and challenges in implementing it—or any assessment of similar large-scale, mandatory efforts in the future—should take into account the challenges states faced when implementing the program under a very short time frame and the possible effects on the operations of other reemployment programs operated at AJCs.

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**APPENDIX A:**

**DESCRIPTION AND ASSESSMENT OF AGGREGATE  
STATE DATA SOURCES AND PRESENTATION OF  
SUPPLEMENTAL TABLES AND FIGURES**

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This appendix contains a description of the aggregate state data sources and data items used in the analysis presented in the main chapters. In addition, we describe data sources and elements that we evaluated for possible inclusion in the report but, because of concerns about data quality, decided not to incorporate. As part of our study design, we had planned to conduct an analysis of state-level administrative reports based on data provided by states to DOL to make general inferences about the EUC08 RES/REA program and its participants. Under ideal circumstances, these data would provide an opportunity for learning detailed information about participation in the program. In practice, however, because of our lack of confidence in the completeness and quality of some of the items, we used these data in only a limited way to draw conclusions about the program. We also used, in a limited way, similar information on the UI REA program to provide context for the EUC08 RES/REA program.

Furthermore, we had intended to provide some context for findings about EUC08 RES/REA program participants through comparisons with participants in Wagner-Peyser (WP) Act funded employment services, even though significant differences between these two groups of service participants exist. Most important, EUC08 RES/REA program participants were long-term unemployed and mandated to receive reemployment services to maintain eligibility for EUC08 benefits; in contrast, those receiving WP-funded services are often voluntarily seeking employment services, and they may or may not qualify for unemployment benefits or be long-term unemployed.

As we explored the quality and consistency of the aggregate data on the EUC08 RES/REA program, however, we developed concerns that the reports suffered from significant problems in quality (which we describe in the next section). These problems prevent us from having confidence that we could use the data to can make general statements about EUC08 RES/REA program participants or as a basis for conclusions about the program. As a result, we determined that there would no longer be any value in presenting an analysis of the data about WP program participants in the main text, because those data were intended exclusively to provide context for findings about EUC08 RES/REA program participants.

This appendix contains two sections. In the first, we describe the aggregate state data sources used in the main chapters, as well as those that, out of concern for data quality, we did not use. We also explain why we reached the conclusion that the data were not of sufficient quality to serve as a basis for study findings, and we describe how we used specific data items from these sources in our main chapter text. In the second section, we present figures and tables based on the data sources that did not meet our data quality criteria for inclusion in the main text. *These data are provided for readers' reference, though because of our concerns, we present them without interpretation. In addition, we advise readers to use caution when interpreting the statistics.*

## **A. Administrative data series and data quality**

This section describes the aggregate state data sources that we explored for use in this report. As part of our study design, we intended to collect and analyze aggregate data provided by all states to DOL. Our plans included analysis of the set of nine study states as well as for all 53 UI jurisdictions required to implement the EUC08 RES/REA program (the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands) through (1) the 5159 report, (2) the 9128u report, (3) the 9128 report, (4) the 9002 EUC report, and (5) the 9002 A and C reports.

However, because of concerns about data quality, we decided, after discussions with DOL staff, to limit our use of data to certain elements from the 9128u, 9128, and 5159 reports.

In this section, we provide a brief description of all reports considered for this analysis, as well as our approaches to using these data for analysis. When we discuss specific reports below, we explain our assessment of the quality of the data. We discuss the 9128u and 9128 reports together because of their similarities; we do so with the 9002 EUC, 9002 A, and 9002 C reports for the same reason.

Importantly, in the main chapters of this report, because of problems we encountered with these data items for other UI jurisdictions, we present information based only on the aggregate data items for whose quality we have a reasonable level of confidence, and only for the nine study states.

### **1. 5159 data**

The 5159 report contains monthly data about the number of EUC08 Tier 1 and Tier 2 claimants in each state, as well as other data items not used for this study.<sup>29</sup> The 5159 data are helpful to the study because they serve as a benchmark for the number of EUC08 claimants potentially subject to the EUC08 RES/REA program participation mandate, though some claimants could receive waivers from it. Although we noted a few instances of information in the 5159 data that was incomplete or very likely to be inaccurate, we concluded that these data were generally of high quality.

### **2. 9128u and 9128 data**

The 9128u report, which is presented in TEGL 20-11, Change 2 (Oates 2012e), contains quarterly information on the EUC08 RES/REA program, such as the numbers of EUC08 claimants who were scheduled for services, who completed all services to which they were mandated, and who were disqualified from receiving benefits. We use these data to calculate basic rates of participation in EUC08 RES/REA services, which we estimated as the ratio of the number of claimants who completed all their mandated services to the number of claimants scheduled for services. We also used the 9128u data describing the number of claimants scheduled for services in conjunction with 5159 data to estimate an exemption rate from the program. The 9128 report contains similar information, also on a quarterly basis, from states that have a UI REA program. We compared EUC08 RES/REA participation levels to those from the regular UI REA program.

Because the 9128u report was new with the advent of the EUC08 RES/REA program, states had to develop procedures to capture the necessary data and generate the report while the program was operational. As discussed in Chapter III, some states had difficulty doing so. The 9128 report, in contrast, was in use for a longer time. Generally speaking, the 9128u and 9128 data we collected from DOL cover the period from near the start of the EUC08 RES/REA program in early 2012, through the end of 2013 when the EUC08 RES/REA program concluded.

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<sup>29</sup> To be precise, the data are first payments made for each EUC08 program tier. Although there are some differences between the number of “claimants” and the number of “first payments,” we refer to “claimants” here for consistency with other portions of the report.



As a result of our investigations of the 9128u report data, we determined that we could be reasonably confident in some of, but not all, the data items for the study states in the 9128u report. Our analysis of data quality led us to include, in the main chapters, results from analyses of the data items about the numbers of EUC08 claimants who were scheduled for services and who participated in the mandated services (data items 1-2 of the 9182u report). However, even with this small set of data, we found some instances in which they were unavailable or had to be excluded from analysis because the reported values were implausible. We adjusted the data when possible and noted those situations where we present our results.

We did not have confidence in the quality of data items 3 through 11 in the 9128u report, which pertained to receipt of additional services, noncompliance with the program, disqualifications from receiving benefits, and the rescheduling of individuals for services. For each data item, between three and four of the nine study states were missing one or more of these data elements in one or more quarters of the time period relevant for the analysis. Given the prevalence of this problem among study states, we chose not to use these data items from the 9128u report in the main chapters of this report. Because our analysis of the 9128 report data about the UI REA program was meant exclusively to provide context for the findings from the 9128u data about the EUC08 RES/REA program, our analysis of the 9128 data was limited in a similar way.

### **3. 9002 EUC and 9002 data**

The 9002 EUC report, included in the 9002 reports, was intended to provide state-level aggregate information on the demographic characteristics of EUC08 RES/REA program participants (claimants), the types of reemployment services and referrals they received, and their post-participation outcomes. The 9002 EUC report structure was based on a series of 9002 reports that were already in use prior to the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act (the “Act”) and pertain more generally to participants in the WP program. The demographic characteristics include information about participants’ gender, age, and veteran status. The services for which information is available include any staff-assisted service, career guidance, job-search activities, referrals to employment, referrals to Workforce Investment Act services, and workforce information services. The 9002 EUC and 9002 data on post-participation outcomes, as defined by the DOL common measures standards, are available for exiters of the EUC08 RES/REA or WP programs, respectively—that is, people who stopped receiving program services for 90 days or more. The outcome measures pertain to participants’ transitions into employment, their employment retention rates, and their post-program earnings.

#### **a. 9002 EUC Internal Consistency Checks**

During our investigations of the completeness and quality 9002 EUC data, we detected problems that led us to exclude from the main chapters all results based on these data. Specifically, we observed several data quality issues related to the consistency of the data items across quarterly reports. Most important, in terms of our ability to describe participants, 14 of the 44 non-study states were missing one or more quarters of 9002 EUC series data. The pervasiveness of missing data would have prevented us from making statements about the EUC08 RES/REA program nationwide. No quarterly data were missing among the study states.

We also found that the count of participants across 9002 EUC quarterly report periods fluctuated implausibly, given the overlapping nature of the calendar quarters summarized in the

reports. To understand this, one must recognize that each 9002 series report, published quarterly, provides a moving summary of the prior four quarters of data. The September 2013 report, for example, provides a count of participants from October 2012 through September 2013. The next report, from December 2013, provides a count from January through December of 2013. In this case, the two reports both include the count of participants from January through September 2013.

After discussions with DOL staff, we speculated that these larger-than-expected fluctuations in the counts we observed across reports might have been due to inconsistent state reporting of EUC08 claimants, who were typically identified by a flag in their record of participation in employment services in American Job Centers (AJCs) and aggregated for the 9002 EUC reports. In some cases, staff reporting these data in states might have (1) failed to use these record flags to identify claimant records in their data systems as EUC08 RES/REA participants, or (2) used the flags inconsistently. If a state recorded an EUC08 RES/REA claimant's service participation but did not correctly flag the EUC08 RES/REA program status, then he or she would be shown in the data as a regular WP participant. In addition, if a state recognized after one 9002 EUC report was generated that the flag was not used comprehensively, staff might have added the flag to participants who were incorrectly excluded from the previous report—a process that would lead to inconsistencies across reports.

Similarly, in the 9002 EUC data, we observed that in many states and report periods, the numbers of reported exiters from services were either much larger or much smaller than expected, given the reported numbers of participants in prior quarters. For example, in one state, 11,374 exiters were reported in a one-year period; however, only 331 claimants were reported as participating in services in a one-year period ending three months prior, which should be about the size or magnitude of the exiting cohort. Similar patterns were observed in a number of states. Again, these patterns might also have resulted from inconsistent flagging of EUC08 Tier 1 or Tier 2 claimants as participants of the EUC08 RES/REA program or another type of problem. We do not believe these observed issues were related to the timing of participation and exit in the 9002 data, as we took these timing considerations into account in our data checks.<sup>30</sup>

Finally, it is worth noting that the each record upon which the 9002 EUC report is based is not necessarily a unique claimant who participated in the EUC08 RES/REA program. As with other 9002 reports, each participant who has gone 90 days without receipt of a service is considered to have exited from the program, and his or her post-program outcomes are subsequently measured. If a participant who has exited subsequently returns for additional services, a new data record on that participant is created and is not linked to the previous record. Thus, the unit of reporting for the 9002 EUC data is the number of unique entries and exits from participation in program services in a period, not the number of unique participants in that

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<sup>30</sup> Each report includes an aggregated full year of participation and exit information. These participation and exit statistics cover different periods. For example, as explained above, the December 2013 report shows the number of participants from January 2013 through December 2013, but it shows the number of exiters lagged one quarter earlier: from October 2012 through September 2013. We accounted for these reference period differences by comparing participation numbers for the full year to exit numbers from the full year one quarter later. As a cross-check of our analysis, we also made a comparison to exiter numbers from the same period as the participation numbers.

period, because an individual might be represented more than one time in the data during a year or across multiple years.<sup>31</sup>

### **b. Comparisons of the 9128u and 9002 EUC Data**

We observed inconsistencies when we compared the number of EUC08 RES/REA program participants in the 9002 EUC report to information reported in more reliable data items in the 9128u series. In both series, we would have expected roughly comparable numbers of program participants after taking into account the differences in how participation is measured in the reports. When we compared 9002 EUC data on participants to participant information in the 9128u data (as measured by either the number of EUC08 claimants scheduled for program services or the number who completed all mandatory services), we found that, in many cases, the numbers were dramatically different. For example, one non-study state reported more than 300,000 program participants in the 9002 EUC series for 2013. However, fewer than 27,000 claimants were reported as having been scheduled for EUC08 RES/REA services in the same time period in the 9128u data. Inconsistent patterns also were observed in study states. For example, in one study state, the 9002 EUC series showed fewer than 42,000 participants during 2013, but the 9128u data showed that more than 90,000 claimants were scheduled for an initial EUC08 RES/REA service and provided all mandated services.

When drawing conclusions about the quality of the data, we recognized that information from the 9002 EUC reports might differ from information in the 9128u reports for legitimate reasons. For example, the latter provides information about the number of EUC08 claimants scheduled for an initial RES/REA or the number who completed mandatory services. These two numbers could be viewed as upper and lower bounds on the number of participants, because some EUC08 claimants were scheduled for services but did not in fact participate, while other claimants participated but did not complete all mandatory services. As described above, the 9002 EUC report, in contrast, provides information on a participation *period*, not a unique participant. The number of participants in the 9128u data might, therefore, differ from the number of participation periods in the 9002 EUC data for this valid difference in how the statistics are constructed.<sup>32</sup>

However, the discrepancies between the two data sources were sufficiently large and variable across states that we do not think they could be explained by legitimate reasons, including by how the differences in the numbers were constructed in these two data sources.

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<sup>31</sup> Because the data are aggregated to the state level, we were not able to determine the extent to which individuals were represented multiple times in the data. For this reason, as well as others, the summary characteristics may be different from the characteristics of EUC08 RES/REA participants if each participant is counted only once.

<sup>32</sup> It is not entirely correct to conclude that the 9128u report is a count of unique individuals, because individuals could have been counted more than once if they went through the EUC08 RES/REA program more than once. It is technically possible for someone to have established eligibility for EUC08 Tier 1 or Tier 2 benefits—and hence be mandated to participate in the EUC08 RES/REA program—more than once during the period the program was in operation. However, repeated participation in the program during a single unemployment benefits claim series arising from a single benefit year was not required to maintain EUC08 benefit eligibility. Furthermore, rescheduled EUC08 RES/REA appointments (for a single session) were counted only once for each participant.

## B. Conclusions about aggregate data quality

Ultimately, because of the checks we conducted on the aggregate data, we concluded that the data items in the 5159 reports that were relevant for our analysis, as well as some data items in the 9128u reports from study states (specifically, items 1-2), were of sufficient quality for use in our analysis. However, other 9128u data items (specifically, items 3-11), as well as all the 9002 EUC data items, were not of a quality in which we felt confidence in drawing study conclusions. A summary of these data items and our data quality concerns is in Table A.1 below.

**Table A.1. Overview of conclusions about aggregate data quality related to the EUC08 RES/REA Program**

Report	Items	Data issues
5159	All	– Data pass quality checks and are used in main chapters of this report
9128u	1-2	– Data pass quality checks and are used in main chapters of this report
9128u	3-11	– High rates of missing data in several of these elements for entire states suggest inconsistent use of data elements by states
9002 EUC	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Missing data for 14 of 44 non-study states in at least one quarter</li> <li>– Numbers of participants and exiters not consistent across reporting periods (exiters are too high/low compared to participants in reference period; participant count fluctuates across reporting periods more than is plausible)</li> <li>– Inconsistencies between the number of participants and the number scheduled for or completing services in 9128u report</li> </ul>

Sources: ETA 5159; ETA 9128u; ETA 9002 EUC. Data from April 2012 through December 2013.

## C. Supplemental tables and figures

The tables and figures provided here did not meet our standards for either presentation in the main chapters of the study report or use as a basis for general inferences about EUC08 RES/REA program participants. We include this information, for study states only, for reference by interested readers, but we caution that care must be used in its interpretation.

### 1. EUC08 RES/REA program reasons for disqualification

In Table A.2, we report data about reasons for disqualification from EUC08 benefit receipt as reported by study states in the 9128u series. These data elements were intended to capture the reasons that EUC08 RES/REA program participants were disqualified from benefit receipt as a result of nonparticipation in services or of having been deemed ineligible for benefits as a result of issues identified during the eligibility and work search review. By the reporting definition, claimants who were disqualified were not eligible to receive EUC08 benefits for at least one week as a result of their disqualification, so these rates may include both short- and long-term disqualifications from the program. The data that states report to DOL, and that were used for this study do not provide any information on the average duration of disqualification, or whether those who were disqualified were later able to receive EUC08 benefits.

The reasons for disqualification or temporary benefits ineligibility were:

- *Failure to report for initial RES/REA.* Claimants who were disqualified or ineligible for EUC08 benefits for at least one week for failure to report for their first scheduled EUC08 RES/REA session (for example, orientation or eligibility assessment) from among those scheduled for an initial session.
- *Failure to participate in reemployment service.* Claimants who were disqualified or temporarily ineligible for benefits for failing to participate in a mandated reemployment service from among those scheduled for an initial EUC08 RES/REA.
- *Eligibility and work-search review.* Claimants who were disqualified or temporarily ineligible for benefits as a result of the state determining that they had not fulfilled their obligation to actively conduct a work search or were otherwise ineligible.

**Table A.2. EUC08 RES/REA reasons for disqualification<sup>a</sup>**

State	Reason for disqualification (as a percentage of all EUC08 claimants scheduled for RES/REA services)			Total <sup>b</sup>
	Failure to report for initial RES/REA	Failure to participate in reemployment service	Eligibility and work search review	
Arkansas	0.0 <sup>c</sup>	0.0 <sup>c</sup>	0.1	0.1 <sup>c</sup>
Delaware	12.7	0.3	2.1	15.0
Georgia	9.6	1.0	0.5	11.1
Massachusetts	0.4	2.8	1.2	4.4
Minnesota	13.8	10.2	16.3	40.3
Nebraska	33.7	0.0 <sup>c</sup>	2.7	36.4 <sup>c</sup>
New Hampshire	3.4	5.7	33.2	42.4
Washington	11.2	0.0 <sup>c</sup>	3.8	15.0 <sup>c</sup>
West Virginia	36.5	0.0 <sup>c</sup>	1.3	37.8 <sup>c</sup>

Source: ETA 9128u. Data from April 2012 to December 2013.

Notes: Percentages reported. As described in Section A of this appendix, we caution readers to use care when they interpret the information in this table. *Failure to report for initial RES/REA* column is claimants disqualified for failure to report for the initial RES/REA session. *Failure to participate in reemployment service* column is claimants disqualified for failing to participate in a mandated reemployment service. *Eligibility and work search review* column is claimants disqualified as a result of the eligibility or work search review after they received required EUC08 RES/REA services.

<sup>a</sup> Table includes all claimants disqualified or temporarily ineligible for EUC08 benefits for one week or longer from among all those scheduled for an initial EUC08 RES/REA.

<sup>b</sup> The *Total* column shows the sum of these three reasons for disqualification as a percentage of all claimants scheduled for an initial EUC08 RES/REA. As a result of rounding, the three columns do not sum to the Total column for Delaware and New Hampshire.

<sup>c</sup>The data that describe the reasons for disqualification are limited in Arkansas, Nebraska, Washington, and West Virginia. In these states, some report data items list zero EUC08 claimants as disqualified. In these cases, we are unable to determine if this reflects missing data or whether the state did not disqualify claimants for these reasons. However, information reported by state and frontline staff during the site visits suggests that, at least in some of these cases, the values of zero for the data items reflect missing data.

EUC08 = Emergency Unemployment Compensation Act of 2008; RES/REA = Reemployment Services and Reemployment Eligibility Assessment.

## 2. Basic demographics of EUC08 RES/REA program participants

Table A.3 shows data on the demographic characteristics of EUC08 RES/REA program participants in study states. The percentages pertain to participants in 9002 EUC data as of the first available report through the end of 2013.<sup>33</sup> As we noted above, these rates correspond to participation periods, so individuals may be represented in the data more than once during this period.

**Table A.3. Characteristics of EUC08 RES/REA participants and WP participants**

Percentage	Study state (EUC08 RES/REA program)									All study states <sup>a</sup>	
	AR	DE	GA	MA	MN	NE	NH	WA	WV	EUC08 RES/REA	WP
Male	52.3	49.2	47.7	53.3	51.0	46.9	57.0	50.7	61.1	52.2	53.8
Veteran	6.7	9.1	10.8	6.3	9.0	7.0	6.7	8.4	6.5	7.8	7.9
Youth	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	8.1	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.5	0.8
Age 18-44	53.2	49.0	56.1	49.1	44.7	56.9	49.8	48.6	54.9	51.2	63.0
Age 45-54	25.4	25.0	25.1	24.6	24.6	23.8	26.2	24.4	24.0	25.0	20.9
Age >54	21.4	26.0	18.7	26.3	22.6	19.3	24.0	26.9	21.1	23.3	15.4

Sources: ETA 9002 A and ETA 9002 EUC. Data from April 2012 to December 2013.

Notes: Percentages reported. As described in Section A of this appendix, we caution readers to use care when interpreting the information in this table. For some states, the number of EUC08 RES/REA participants differed significantly from similar information reported in the 9128u series. These differences might be related to incorrect identification of EUC08 claimants, or participants being represented more than once in the 9002 EUC data.

<sup>a</sup> Data reported for the nine states participating in the implementation study: Arkansas (AR), Delaware (DE), Georgia (GA), Massachusetts (MA), Minnesota (MN), Nebraska (NE), New Hampshire (NH), Washington (WA), and West Virginia (WV).

EUC08 = Emergency Unemployment Compensation Act of 2008; RES/REA = Reemployment Services and Reemployment Eligibility Assessment; WP = Wagner-Peyser Act funded employment services.

## 3. EUC08 RES/REA participants' receipt of additional services

In Table A.4, we report data on EUC08 RES/REA program participants' receipt of additional services. Additional services were those offered to supplement the four mandated EUC08 RES/REA program services and, per DOL's guidance, could include career or job-search counseling, referrals to training, or other reemployment services. The counts below represent those receiving additional services as a percentage of all claimants scheduled for their first EUC08 RES/REA appointment. These services were permitted, but not required, by the Act.

<sup>33</sup> The first report on EUC08 RES/REA participants was released in November 2012 and covered EUC08 RES/REA participation from the start of the program, in March 2012, through September 2012.

**Table A.4. EUC08 RES/REA participation rate in additional services, by quarter<sup>a</sup>**

State	2012Q2	2012Q3	2012Q4	2013Q1	2013Q2	2013Q3	2013Q4	Total
Arkansas	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Delaware	18.5	25.3	18.4	16.5	18.5	22.0	18.6	19.7
Georgia	40.7	57.1	68.7	100.7	80.8	83.5	84.6	68.8
Massachusetts	12.2	26.8	27.2	20.0	24.9	20.4	37.3	23.0
Minnesota	72.1	75.0	72.0	76.8	69.1	74.8	73.2	73.3
Nebraska	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
New Hampshire	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Washington	55.2	55.5	54.7	56.6	54.7	52.7	54.3	54.9

Source: ETA 9128u. Data from April 2012 to December 2013.

Note: The participation rate in additional services is defined as the ratio of the number of claimants provided additional services to the number scheduled for their first EUC08 RES/REA appointment. Additional services were those offered to supplement the four mandated EUC08 RES/REA program services and, per DOL's guidance, could include career or job-search counseling, referrals to training, or other reemployment services.

<sup>a</sup> Data are reported for eight of the nine study states. West Virginia was excluded because it reported a higher count of additional service receipt than the total number of scheduled claimants.

#### 4. EUC08 RES/REA participants' receipt of services in AJCs and affiliates

In Table A.5 and Figure A.1, we report data on receipt of services among EUC08 RES/REA program participants in AJCs and affiliates, and a comparison to employment services received by WP participants. We do not know the extent to which these services are the same as the additional services that some states required of EUC08 RES/REA participants and which are shown in Table A.4 of this appendix and discussed in Section IV.C of the report. These data elements, contained in the 9002 series (for WP and EUC08), were reported by states for participants with dates of participation from the start of the EUC08 RES/REA program through its completion at the end of 2013. As we noted above, these rates correspond to participation periods, so individuals may be represented in the data more than once during this period.

The 9002 series report defines the staff-assisted services as follows:

- *Career Guidance*: Information, assessments, and advice to participants regarding their occupation and career decisions.
- *Job Search Activities*: Services—including help with resume preparation, job readiness workshops, and interview preparation—designed to help participants design a job search plan and carry out a job search.
- *Referral to Employment*: A staff referral to a job or employer for an individual participant or a group of participants.
- *Referral to WIA Services*: A staff referral to a service delivered under the Workforce Investment Act. This includes, for example, more intensive career counseling or training services.

Participants also received *Workforce Information Services*, either staff-assisted or self-service. These services provided information to participants on the conditions of the state or local labor market, the skills needed in the high demand occupations and industries, and rates of job vacancies in occupations and industries in the state.

**Table A.5. Services provided to EUC08 RES/REA participants and WP participants**

Percentage...	Study state (EUC08 RES/REA program)									All study states <sup>a</sup>	
	AR	DE	GA	MA	MN	NE	NH	WA	WV	EUC08 RES/REA	WP
Received at least one staff-assisted service <sup>b</sup>	96.2	92.8	99.8	99.2	80.6	73.0	69.1	98.2	92.9	89.9	74.3
Career guidance	7.2	4.2	77.6	92.6	63.8	55.6	15.6	96.7	9.5	59.2	28.8
Job search activities	8.4	90.5	87.4	96.0	64.2	51.2	60.0	96.3	67.8	75.3	42.8
Referral to employment	7.3	61.0	41.1	3.5	30.9	34.2	17.7	18.7	22.2	21.4	28.3
Referral to WIA services	6.2	17.6	20.2	1.6	0.6	4.6	1.3	5.2	66.4	8.5	6.6
Received workforce information services <sup>c</sup>	91.8	96.7	89.9	95.5	77.3	94.8	96.9	53.0	67.2	87.7	68.7

Sources: ETA 9002 EUC and 9002 A. Data from April 2012 to December 2013.

Notes: Percentages reported. As described in Section A of this appendix, we caution readers to use care when interpreting the information in this table. For some states, the number of EUC08 RES/REA participants differed significantly from similar information reported in the 9128u series. These differences might be related to incorrect identification of EUC08 claimants, or participants being represented more than once in the 9002 EUC data.

<sup>a</sup> Data reported for the nine states participating in the implementation study: Arkansas (AR), Delaware (DE), Georgia (GA), Massachusetts (MA), Minnesota (MN), Nebraska (NE), New Hampshire (NH), Washington (WA), and West Virginia (WV).

<sup>b</sup> Received one or more staff-assisted services, as opposed to self-service. This can include workforce information services that are staff-assisted.

<sup>c</sup> Workforce information services were either staff-assisted or self-service.

EUC08 = Emergency Unemployment Compensation Act of 2008; RES/REA = Reemployment Services and Reemployment Eligibility Assessment; WIA = Workforce Investment Act; WP = Wagner-Peyser Act funded employment services.

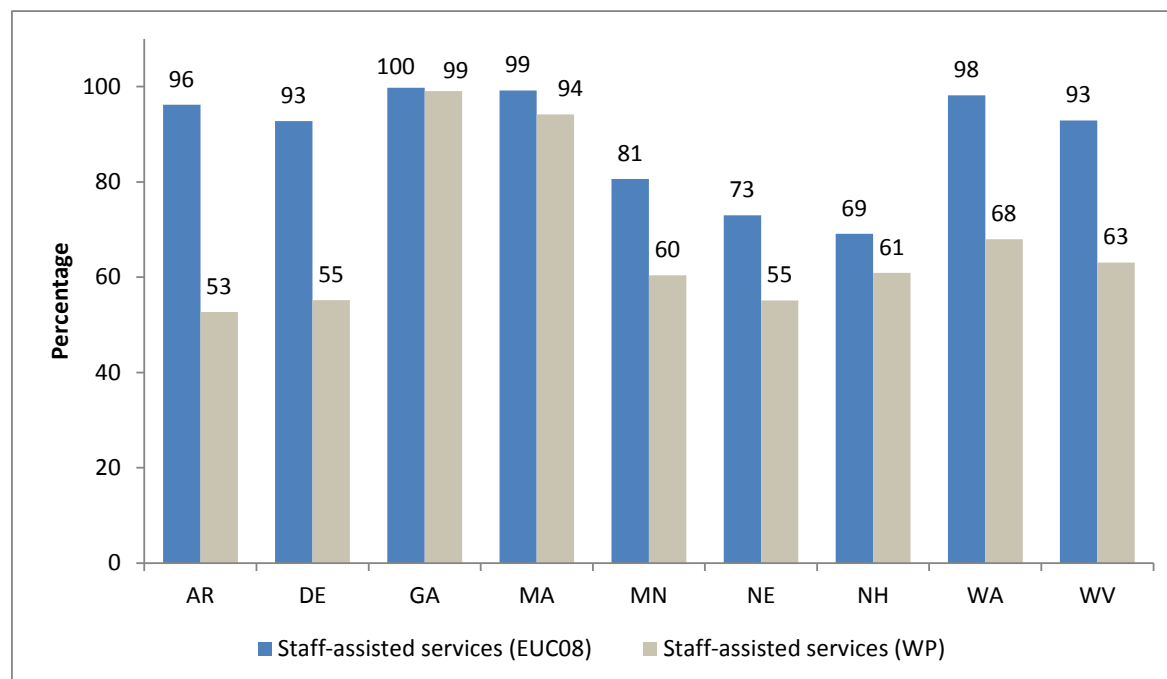
## 5. Employment outcomes for EUC08 RES/REA participants

In Table A.6 below, we provide, for those identified as unemployed and exiting from EUC08 RES/REA or WP services between April 2012 and March of 2013, the rates of job seekers entering employment in their first full quarter after exit.<sup>34</sup> The definition of a *job seeker* is someone who reported being unemployed and looking for employment at the time of service receipt. As discussed earlier, exits are defined in the 9002 series as participants who have gone 90 days without receipt of a service. People are considered to have exited from the program as of the last date of service receipt. In Figure A.2, we provide a scatter plot of the entered employment rate. In both Table A.6 and Figure A.2, we include the state total unemployment rate (TUR) as a potential mediating factor in the search for employment.

<sup>34</sup> The period from April 2012 to March 2013 contains the most recent available data on employment outcomes. The entered employment rate provides information only on the rate of those entering employment, not employment retention. There is only scant information on job retention rates for exiting EUC08 RES/REA participants, given the length of program operation coupled with the length of time required to observe job retention in the reports. For those who exited by September 2012 (the second full program quarter and the last quarter from which exiters' job retention outcomes could be observed given the available data), between 67 percent and 83 percent of job seekers in study states who were employed in the first program quarter after exit were still employed in the third quarter after their exit quarter.



**Figure A.1. Receipt of staff-assisted services by EUC08 RES/REA participants and WP participants<sup>a</sup>**



Sources: ETA 9002 A and 9002 EUC. Data from April 2012 to December 2013.

Notes: As described in Section A of this appendix, we caution readers to use care when interpreting the information in this table. For some states, the number of EUC08 RES/REA participants differed significantly from similar information reported in the 9128u series. These differences might be related to incorrect identification of EUC08 claimants, or participants being represented more than once in the 9002 EUC data. The figure includes the rate of receipt of one or more staff-assisted service, as opposed to self-service. This can include workforce information services that are staff-assisted.

<sup>a</sup> Data reported for the nine states participating in the implementation study: Arkansas (AR), Delaware (DE), Georgia (GA), Massachusetts (MA), Minnesota (MN), Nebraska (NE), New Hampshire (NH), Washington (WA), and West Virginia (WV).

EUC08 = Emergency Unemployment Compensation Act of 2008; RES/REA = Reemployment Services and Reemployment Eligibility Assessment; WP = Wagner-Peyser Act funded employment services.

**Table A.6. Entered employment rate for exiting EUC08 RES/REA participants and WP participants unemployed at participation**

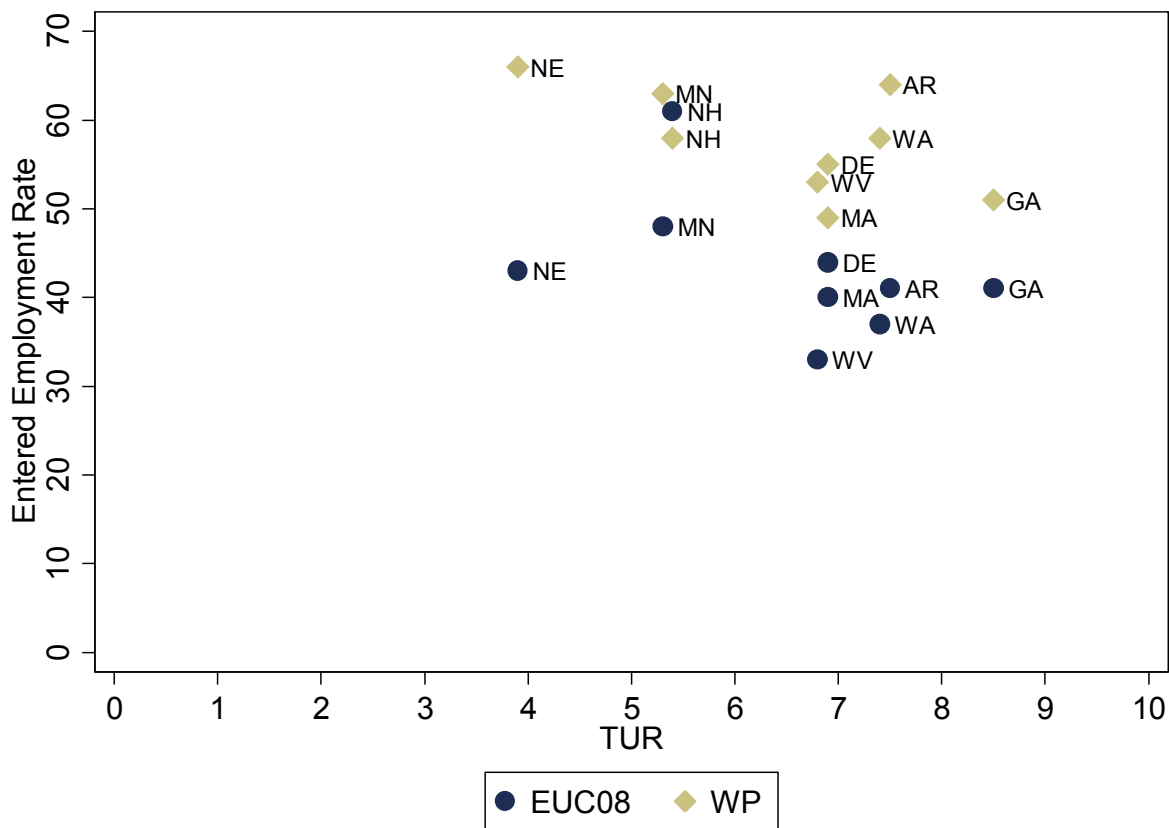
State	EUC08 RES/REA program			WP program	
	TUR	Total exits	Entered employment rate	Total exits	Entered employment rate
Arkansas	7.5	22,921	41%	246,759	64%
Delaware	6.9	8,720	44%	57,218	57%
Georgia	8.5	42,134	41%	529,981	53%
Massachusetts	6.9	77,017	40%	235,760	48%
Minnesota	5.3	13,620	48%	227,892	63%
Nebraska	3.9	14,690	43%	102,590	66%
New Hampshire	5.4	52,472	61%	63,643	58%
Washington	7.4	39,298	37%	387,277	58%
West Virginia	6.8	10,080	33%	107,359	53%

Sources: ETA 9002, ETA 9002 EUC. Data from April 2012 to March 2013. This period contains the most recent available data for employment outcomes. TUR data come from author’s calculations of Bureau of Labor Statistics data available at [http://bls.gov/data]. Accessed in January 2015.

Notes: As described in Section A of this appendix, we caution readers to use care when interpreting the information in this table. For some states, the number of EUC08 RES/REA participants differed significantly from similar information reported in the 9128u series. These differences might be related to incorrect identification of EUC08 claimants, or participants being represented more than once in the 9002 EUC data. The TUR is the state total unemployment rate averaged across April 2012 to December 2013. *Entered employment rate* is the percentage of job seekers—those not already employed at the time they participated in services—finding employment in the first full quarter after program exit.

EUC08 = Emergency Unemployment Compensation Act of 2008; TUR = total unemployment rate; RES/REA = Reemployment Services and Reemployment Eligibility Assessment; WP = Wagner-Peyser Act funded employment services.

**Figure A.2. Entered employment rate and TUR in EUC08 RES/REA study states, a comparison of EUC08 program and Wagner-Peyser participants<sup>a</sup>**



Sources: ETA 9002 EUC. Data from April 2012 to March 2013. This period contains the most recent available data for employment outcomes. TUR data come from author’s calculations of Bureau of Labor Statistics data available at [<http://bls.gov/data>]. Accessed in January 2015.

Notes: As described in Section A of this appendix, we caution readers to use care when they interpret the information in this table. For some states, the number of EUC08 RES/REA participants differed significantly from similar information reported in the 9128u series. These differences might be related to incorrect identification of EUC08 claimants, or participants being represented more than one time in the 9002 EUC data. The TUR is the state total unemployment rate averaged across April 2012 to December 2013.

*Entered employment rate* is the percentage of job seekers—those not already employed at the time they participated in services—finding employment in the first full quarter after program exit. The correlation between the TUR and this rate is -46 percent for EUC08 and -61 percent for WP.

<sup>a</sup> Data reported for the nine states visited as part of the implementation study: Arkansas (AR), Delaware (DE), Georgia (GA), Massachusetts (MA), Minnesota (MN), Nebraska (NE), New Hampshire (NH), Washington (WA), and West Virginia (WV).

EUC08 = Emergency Unemployment Compensation Act of 2008; TUR = total unemployment rate; RES/REA = Reemployment Services and Reemployment Eligibility Assessment; WP = Wagner-Peyser Act funded employment services.

**APPENDIX B:**  
**SITE VISIT BRIEFS**

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## SITE VISIT BRIEF — ARKANSAS

### Site visit information

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**Site visitor:** Megan Hague Angus

**Date of visit:** December 11, 2013

**Locations visited:** Arkansas Department of Workforce Services, Arkansas Workforce Center, 5401 S. University, Little Rock, AR

### Site summary

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A member of the study team traveled to Little Rock, Arkansas, for a one-day visit with staff in the Arkansas Department of Workforce Services (ADWS), located at the local Arkansas Workforce Center (AWC). ADWS houses both the Unemployment Insurance (UI) and the Employment Assistance (EA) divisions, which oversee services for job seekers delivered through a network of 32 AWCs. Both UI and EA staff are located in the AWCs.

The Emergency Unemployment Compensation Act of 2008 (EUC08) Reemployment Services and Reemployment Eligibility Assessment (RES/REA) program in Arkansas was notable for its successful partnership between the UI and EA divisions to offer claimants a seamless, in-person experience. Non-exempt EUC08 claimants were required to attend a scheduled 4- to 6-hour group orientation workshop held at an AWC. The orientation was modeled on the state's Worker Profiling and Reemployment Services (WPRS) program, which required that profiled UI claimants attend a day-long workshop, but was shortened to fit the EUC08 RES/REA program's time frame. Frontline staff at an AWC serving one of the state's larger counties reported an average attendance of 10 to 12 per orientation, held approximately twice weekly. Before the orientation, claimants met individually with UI staff to review their work-search log and complete a skills assessment called Transferable Occupation Relationship Quotient (TORQ; described below). During the orientation, EA staff taught claimants how to search more effectively for jobs, write resumes, and interview successfully; they also provided labor market information. Claimants who successfully completed the orientation were deemed to have satisfied their RES/REA participation requirement.

### Highlights from the site visit

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- **Arkansas used its experience with the WPRS program and input from other states with UI REA programs to design its EUC08 RES/REA program.** The state's WPRS program offered services similar to those required by the RES/REA program; these services were tailored and adapted to meet EUC08 claimants' needs. State leadership of both the UI and EA divisions were also active members of two major state workforce consortia and felt strongly that these groups provided useful, informative resources during the design process, especially because the state lacked an existing UI REA program to use as a model for the RES/REA program.
- **The presence of UI staff in the AWCs was viewed as an important facilitating factor for successfully implementing the EUC08 RES/REA program.** Claimants and UI staff were already accustomed to meeting face to face, because they were required to do so when completing initial UI applications. State leadership also decided that UI staff would address the program's eligibility assessment portion, whereas EA staff would deliver services. The colocation of UI and EA staff facilitated their cross-training on the program's key elements to further facilitate seamless service delivery.

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- **A strict workshop-attendance policy sent claimants a strong message about the importance of participation.** EUC08 claimants were provided with a date for their orientation workshop and were able to reschedule only with a valid excuse, such as a job interview (with proof in writing), a death in the family, or a conflict with an approved training program. Failure to attend without an approved excuse could have resulted in denied benefits for that week. Staff estimated that 76 percent of claimants across the state attended their scheduled appointments.
  - **Arkansas dedicated full-time staff to the EUC08 RES/REA program in several of the state's AWCs and offered intensive services to claimants who visited those centers.** At the time of the site visit, five AWCs had full-time EA staff dedicated to the RES/REA program. EA staff in these centers scheduled one-on-one meetings with claimants for about 30 minutes, every 2 weeks, over the course of 10 weeks (up to five additional meetings). The meetings covered largely the topics addressed in the workshop but added supplementary focused, personalized attention. Although we do not have participants' data to determine whether they did in fact participate in the more intensive services, staff strongly encouraged EUC08 RES/REA claimants to participate in these additional services. The state expressed a desire to provide these services through all AWCs but was unable to do so due to resource constraints.
  - **Staff believed that the TORQ skills assessment helped claimants meet their work search requirements and find work quickly.** The assessment tool enabled claimants to enter their previous work or volunteer experiences and then provided (via email) real-time job openings that matched their skill sets. Based on the skills entered, the tool also suggested additional careers that might be appropriate. Because of the positive views of AWC staff for the TORQ, it is being adopted for use by clients in other ADWS programs.
  - **Staff reported that a pilot program, offering many of the services provided by EUC08 RES/REA, would begin in January 2014.** The state felt that the RES/REA services provided to EUC08 claimants offered important benefits and decided to pilot a similar, optional program that would be available to all UI claimants. At the time of the site visit, plans were being developed to hold, throughout the state, EA staff-led workshops that would be open to all UI claimants interested in attending.

## SITE VISIT BRIEF — DELAWARE

### Site visit information

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**Site visitor:** Samina Sattar

**Date of visit:** January 23, 2014

**Locations visited:** Delaware Department of Labor and Fox Valley American Job Center (4425 North Market Street, Wilmington, DE)

### Site summary

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A member of the study team traveled to Wilmington, Delaware, for a one-day visit with staff in the Delaware Department of Labor, which houses both the Division of Unemployment Insurance (DUI) and the Division of Employment and Training (DET), the division that oversees the state's four American Job Centers (AJCs).

State staff reflected that the timing of the Emergency Unemployment Compensation Act of 2008 (EUC08) Reemployment Services and Reemployment Eligibility Assessment (RES/REA) legislation was fortunate; they had worked on improvements to several components of their reemployment service delivery on which they could capitalize when implementing the RES/REA program. The improvements included a centralized appointment scheduling system and new job-matching and search tools for job seekers. When claimants established an initial EUC08 claim in person at a local AJC, people who were not exempt from RES/REA requirements (did not have a recall date, were not in a union hiring hall, did not present a medical exemption, and did not live outside the state) were referred to DET staff within the AJC for mandatory services that same day or within three business days. The state estimated that only 5 percent of claimants were exempted from RES/REA participation. In the DET registration area, non-exempt claimants were required to watch a short orientation video about services available to job seekers, update their Delaware JobLink registrations and resumes, and meet individually with a DET staff member to conduct an initial search for jobs in JobLink and receive a personalized job referral (if available). Roughly a week after this meeting, participants received two weeks' notice for a mandatory, 90- to 120-minute DET-led workshop at the AJC. During the workshop, participants received additional RES/REA services (a skills assessment, labor market information, and a review of their weekly job search contact) as part of an interactive session based on the recently developed Delaware Career Guide. On average, 10 to 15 participants were scheduled for each of the workshops, which were held several times a week in each AJC.

The initial orientation and meeting with DET staff after the claim establishment process, the subsequent workshop, and a satisfactory review of one weekly job search contact were the necessary components for the claimant to fully meet the requirements of the EUC08 RES/REA program in Delaware.

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### Highlights from the site visit

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- **The EUC08 RES/REA program in Delaware was the first major partnership between DUI and DET staff.** DET leadership had indicated an interest in a large-scale intervention program for UI and EUC08 claimants in the past, but the state reported lacking the resources to make it happen. After DUI learned of the EUC08 RES/REA program requirements, it met with DET to design a program that would leverage the capacity and strengths of both departments. DET already had the Delaware Career Guide, which aligned well with the RES requirements of the Federal EUC08 program and became the basis for the interactive workshop. DET also subscribes to a state consortium for the maintenance of its data system, which completed the programming required to interface between DUI and DET. DUI managed the bulk of the REA process, including referring only non-exempt people to DET, handling all individual rescheduling requests, and establishing and adjudicating claims. DET focused on other aspects of program implementation, including the scheduling and notification system, the workshop, and other reemployment services. DET and DUI reported continuing to work closely to address challenges as the program progressed until it ended.
- **Delaware invested in the development of an intensive workshop for participants that would be relevant to current trends in job search.** DET created a new position exclusively to develop a 90- to 120-minute interactive workshop that would provide effective job search, networking, and interviewing tips and tools to EUC08 RES/REA participants while lowering the per capita cost of services with a group format. The state was already moving toward group service delivery after the expiration of American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding reduced staffing levels in the AJCs. Staff reported viewing the feedback from participants based on an online survey to be extremely positive; the only negative feedback DET staff reported receiving was that claimants wished they had been able to attend the workshop earlier in their unemployment spells.
- **Merit staff recruited to facilitate the workshops relished the opportunity and were enthusiastic about the benefits of the new workshop for participants.** The state originally interpreted Federal guidance as requiring the use of merit staff to provide RES services. Although this was eventually clarified not to be the case, the state had already asked for volunteers from among DET merit staff and received a high level of interest. Staff who volunteered for the role attended an intensive all-day training on how to lead the workshop and practiced presenting the material in front of their peers. DUI staff also trained staff who became facilitators to review participants' work search logs and recognize any potential issues with eligibility or availability for work that might arise during their interaction with participants. Facilitators interviewed during the site visit appreciated the guidance and training they received to implement the workshop and believed that participants benefited from the workshop experience.
- **Positive participant feedback on the workshop and the enthusiasm of frontline staff led the state to apply for a grant to implement a UI REA program that is set to launch in early 2014.** Before the EUC08 RES/REA program, the state had been interested in the UI REA grant program, but felt unprepared because of a lack of staff resources to develop a proposal or content to make a strong program. Delaware's perceived success with the RES/REA program, combined with the hiring of a grant writer, enabled the state to secure a UI REA grant. The new grant will provide funding to serve a slightly smaller number of claimants than the state had served under the EUC08



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RES/REA program. The new UI REA program will follow the same format as the EUC08 RES/REA program, with both an initial orientation and an intensive workshop as mandatory components.

## SITE VISIT BRIEF — GEORGIA

### Site visit information

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**Site visitor:** Claire Smither Wulsin

**Date of visit:** January 15, 2014

**Locations visited:** Georgia Department of Labor (148 Andrew Young International Blvd NE, Atlanta, GA) and GA DOL North Metro Career Center (2943 North Druid Hills Road, Atlanta, GA)

### Site summary

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A member of the study team traveled to Atlanta, Georgia, for a one-day visit with staff from the Georgia Department of Labor (GA DOL). GA DOL houses both the Office of Unemployment Insurance (UI) and the Office of Employment and Training, with the latter overseeing Wagner-Peyser (WP) staff. Frontline UI and WP staff are cross-trained and colocated at the 47 career centers across the state.

The implementation of the Emergency Unemployment Compensation Act of 2008 (EUC08) Reemployment Services and Reemployment Eligibility Assessment (RES/REA) program varied across career centers, as the state gave significant flexibility to career center managers in how to implement the program, within certain guidelines based on Federal law and guidance. Local staff could determine the size of the groups through which services were delivered, how frequently they were held, and when during the service delivery to review the work search logs. Local office staff offered comprehensive hour-long orientations that covered EUC08 RES/REA program requirements, services available at the career center, a skills assessment, and labor market information. The orientations were held either in one-on-one settings or in groups of up to 50 claimants, and varied depending on how many claimants an office had to serve in a particular week and the office's available space. Either UI or WP staff led the orientations. Staff encouraged claimants to complete an O\*NET skills assessment before they attended; if claimants had not done so, they could stay after the orientation to complete the assessment and turn in their scores. Claimants had to complete the skills assessment and log their scores in the computer system within 48 hours of attending an orientation to meet requirements. In some offices, claimants were also encouraged to electronically submit a record of three mandatory weekly job search activities up to 48 hours before their scheduled orientation, which WP or UI frontline staff would review before the orientation and discuss with the claimant afterward. In other offices, claimants could bring to the orientation a hard copy of their logs, and a staff member would help them enter it into the system.

Georgia made ongoing eligibility for EUC08 benefits fully contingent on fulfilling RES/REA requirements. This included an additional mandatory service—career guidance—which was added to the orientation for EUC08 RES/REA participants at some locations; at others, it was similar to the one-on-one counseling WP staff provide through other programs, but with less paperwork for staff and less follow-up with claimants. Although, because of variation in staff availability across the offices, only some locations provided this service to clients on a one-on-one basis, state and frontline staff who were interviewed thought that the career guidance component helped claimants identify the next steps toward the career when coupled with the results of the skills assessment. Claimants who had completed their skills assessment, provided evidence of satisfactory job search activities, attended the orientation, and participated in the

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career guidance session (if it was separate from the orientation) were deemed to have satisfied their EUC08 RES/REA participation requirement. The state created a report that listed claimants who were past due to have completed all services but were not marked as having done so in the system. This list was shared daily with frontline staff who were responsible for looking into these cases. The Georgia computer system was set up so that each of the services was a separate check-box in the computer system. If the claimant came to the orientation but did not have his or her work searches in the computer system, the frontline staff did not check that box. When claimants appeared on the list, frontline staff reviewed their notes and information in the system to determine whether (1) a claimant had actually completed the services but the system was incorrect (for example, if a frontline staff member had inadvertently not checked a service box), or (2) the claimant had not completed services and should be sent to a UI adjudicator for review of eligibility.

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### Highlights from the site visit

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- State UI and WP staff undertook intensive planning and shared responsibility for the EUC08 RES/REA program, which began quickly after the legislation was passed. UI and WP staff had previously worked together successfully on programs such as the state's Worker Profiling and Reemployment Service and were able to capitalize on their past collaborations to move quickly in implementing the EUC08 RES/REA program. Although UI frontline staff were responsible for adjudicating and processing benefit claims, both UI and WP frontline staff shared the duties of managing the mandatory orientation and related activities, based on staff availability and interest. Because UI and WP frontline staff were cross-trained, AJC managers had flexibility in how they assigned the RES/REA work across different types of staff.
- **State staff designed the EUC08 RES/REA program to minimize burden on frontline staff so they could focus on serving claimants.** State staff assumed responsibility for identifying claimants eligible for EUC08 RES/REA services and sending to each career center the list of claimants to schedule each week. They automated several processes that are manual for other programs, such as contacting claimants about their scheduled orientations: when frontline staff scheduled claimants in the computer system, a letter (or an email if an address was available) automatically went out to each claimant. State-level staff also created several automated checks to minimize the time frontline staff spent verifying their own work. For example, state staff generated lists of claimants showing who had not received all services (which could indicate a data entry mistake that might have occurred because staff had to click on each of the five mandated services in the computer system).
- **Staff at local offices received the authority and flexibility to adapt the EUC08 RES/REA program in the way they felt was best for their claimants, which resulted in differences in program implementation across the state.** At the career center visited for the study, the local staff made several adjustments over time to delivery of the EUC08 RES/REA program to improve its performance. For example, they added follow-up calls to the automatic notification emails and letters, which led to an increase in the attendance rate from 50 to 70 percent. In addition, they increased the number of staff present at each orientation from one to two; this enabled one staff member to focus on working with claimants who needed help with their work search logs or skills assessment while the

other signed out claimants who had completed all the requirements, after services had been delivered.

- **The success of the EUC08 RES/REA program inspired the state to use the same scheduling process for the UI REA program, which started in fall 2012.** When designing the UI REA program, state staff adopted the EUC08 RES/REA process for scheduling claimants and sending an automatic email or letter notifying them of their mandatory appointments.

## SITE VISIT BRIEF — MASSACHUSETTS

### Site visit information

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**Site visitor:** Megan Hague Angus

**Dates of visit:** January 14-15, 2014

**Locations visited:** Massachusetts Department of Career Services (19 Staniford St. 1st Floor, Boston, MA 02114) and Job Net Career Center (210 South Street, Boston, MA 02111)

### Site summary

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A member of the study team traveled to Boston, Massachusetts, for a two-day visit with staff in the state office of Massachusetts' Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD) and a nearby Job Net Career Center. EOLWD oversees both the Department of Unemployment Assistance (DUA) and the Department of Career Services (DCS). DUA staff are located in centralized call centers throughout the state, whereas DCS staff are located in each of the state's 33 Career Centers.

The services offered through the Massachusetts Emergency Unemployment Compensation Act of 2008 (EUC08) Reemployment Services and Reemployment Eligibility Assessment (RES/REA) program were modeled heavily on the existing Unemployment Insurance (UI) REA program. Non-exempt claimants (people who had not received reportable, staff-assisted DCS services in the 90 days before EUC08 enrollment) were required during their third week of EUC08 benefits to attend a two-hour orientation held at one of the state's Career Centers and led by DCS staff. These small-group meetings were held several times a week to accommodate the large volume of claimants. The orientation informed claimants about the EUC08 RES/REA program requirements and services offered through the Career Centers. During the orientation, claimants received access to labor market information and took an individual needs assessment. Following the orientation, EUC08 RES/REA participants signed up to meet with DCS staff about two weeks later for a review of their work search. DCS staff conducted an hour-long, one-on-one, in-person review of a claimant's work search, career action plan, and resume. The work-search review covered 6 to 8 weeks of work search logs. If claimants failed to attend the EUC08 orientation, they received a one-week sanction of their benefits. Nonattendance at the one-on-one review resulted in an indefinite sanction. Claimants who attended the workshop and the one-on-one review were deemed to have satisfied their EUC08 RES/REA participation requirement. Massachusetts reported that since the inception of the EUC08 RES/REA program, 122,021 claimants, or 78 percent of those required to participate, completed the program.

### Highlights from the site visit

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- **The existence of the UI REA program contributed to the state's ability to implement the EUC08 RES/REA program efficiently.** The UI REA program was the platform on which the state designed its RES/REA program. The UI REA program requires a 2-hour orientation and, for a sample of randomly selected participants, a more comprehensive, in-person review of work search activities. EUC08 RES/REA modeled its services after the state's UI REA program, which the state views as successful at connecting claimants to services.

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- **Administrators aimed to implement the program effectively, even if this meant taking more time than what was specified in Federal time lines.** Despite the availability of the UI REA program to build upon, the state still found it challenging to implement the RES/REA program within a short time frame. DCS administrators worked to ensure that the 40 staff members hired for the program were well qualified and well trained. The existing tracking system had to be modified to enable both DUA and DCS staff to interface with the system and to allow for flags to stop the payment of benefits for claimants who failed to meet RES/REA program requirements; in addition, staff had to be trained on the use of the modified system. These steps were viewed as important for a well-administered program, but meant that the EUC08 RES/REA program was not fully implemented until May 2012.
  - **The state hired 40 additional staff to implement EUC08, nearly all of whom had to be let go at the end of the program.** Across the state, about 40 additional staff were hired to provide one-on-one counseling to EUC08 participants. Hiring and training them took about 2 months and contributed to the delay in implementing the program. When the program ended, the state let many of the new hires go because it did not have funds to keep them. Although terminating the staff was a challenge for the state, the state leadership asserted that having additional, well-trained staff in place was critical for the implementation of the EUC08 RES/REA program.
  - **DCS staff used several tools, such as automatic reminder calls and checklist handouts, that they thought increased successful participation by claimants.** As noted, claimants who did not attend the mandatory in-person work search review had their benefits indefinitely denied until they attended a review. To avoid this consequence, an automated service made calls to remind claimants of the EUC08 orientation and follow-up work search review appointments. Staff also created checklists of the materials required for the REA review and distributed them to participants to ensure they were well prepared.

## SITE VISIT BRIEF — MINNESOTA

### Site visit information

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**Site visitor:** Claire Smither Wulsin

**Dates of visit:** January 22-23, 2014

**Locations visited:** Department of Employment and Economic Development (332 Minnesota Street, Suite E200, St. Paul, MN) and North Hennepin WorkForce Center: Brooklyn Park (7225 Northland Drive North, Minneapolis, MN)

### Site summary

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A member of the study team traveled to Minneapolis–St. Paul for a 2-day visit with staff from the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (MN DEED). MN DEED houses both the Unemployment Insurance (UI) Department and the WorkForce Department, which contains Wagner-Peyser (WP) staff. Frontline UI staff provide UI Reemployment Eligibility Assessment (REA) services across the state. Both departments provide services through the state’s WorkForce Centers.

UI spearheaded the implementation of the Emergency Unemployment Compensation Act of 2008 (EUC08) Reemployment Services (RES)/REA in Minnesota. State staff adapted the UI REA presentation and used UI frontline staff already in place to administer the EUC08 RES/REA program. EUC08 claimants were required to file for benefits online and were prompted to complete an online profile, including an iSeek skills assessment. The online system automatically scheduled claimants for an EUC08 RES/REA program orientation. The hour-long orientation, led by UI staff, included a discussion of labor market information and an overview of services available in the WorkForce Center. Claimants were scheduled in groups for the orientation, with group size depending on available space at the center. At the center visited by the research team, claimants were scheduled in groups of 12 or 14, and staff expected 8 or 10 claimants to attend. Immediately following the orientation, UI staff met with each participant individually to verify that he or she had completed the skills assessment and to assist the claimant with his or her work search plan. A work search plan is created automatically based on the claimant’s initial online profile, but is reviewed and revised during this one-on-one meeting. Claimants are required to make progress on the work search plan each week in order to receive EUC08 benefits (in lieu of a minimum number of job contacts). UI staff were allotted an average of 4 minutes to meet with each participant.

When WP staff in a center were available, they would offer the Fast Forward curriculum (described later) to the orientation group in a one-hour session following the one-on-one meeting with UI staff. *This* session was required of claimants when offered.

Claimants who completed their online profiles and skills assessments; attended the orientation, one-on-one meeting, and Fast Forward session when offered; and had a work search plan were considered to have met the requirements for the EUC08 RES/REA program. Claimants who did not meet requirements were ineligible for benefits until they completed all requirements.

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**Highlights from the site visit**

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- **The existing UI REA program structure enabled Minnesota to implement EUC08 RES/REA with minimal additional planning.** State staff adapted the presentation used by frontline staff for the existing UI REA program and kept all other structures from UI REA in place. The state did not hire any additional UI frontline staff, instead shifting staff time from the UI REA and Worker Profiling programs to EUC08 RES/REA. The original UI REA grant goal was to serve 60,000 claimants, but the state decreased the goal to 45,000 to provide staff with time to serve EUC08 claimants. Though it originally thought it would not be able to reach its original UI REA goal of 60,000, Minnesota met this goal, after all. It also was able to accommodate the EUC08 RES/REA sessions because the number of EUC08 RES/REA claimants who were actually brought in for services was fewer than originally planned.
- **The computer system used in Minnesota was flexible enough to handle the addition of the EUC08 RES/REA program and enabled state staff to manage the program efficiently.** State staff modified the computer system used by UI to identify eligible claimants, automate scheduling, and track participation. The system, which was put in place in 2007, automatically screened out any exempt claimants; the state used the same exemptions for EUC08 RES/REA as it did for its regular UI program. The system also helped state staff to monitor the flow of claimants and balance the workload across WorkForce Centers, enabling staff to serve claimants in a timely manner.
- **WP staff created a new curriculum for the RES/REA program, which claimants received positively according to staff.** Before the EUC08 RES/REA program began, the frontline WP staff worked in the resource rooms at WorkForce Centers. State-level WP staff designed a new curriculum for frontline WP staff to administer as part of EUC08 RES/REA, called Fast Forward. This interactive curriculum led claimants through the process of searching for a new job. New WP staff were hired to implement this curriculum in most WorkForce Centers across the state. This service was offered to claimants when WP staff were available at WorkForce Centers to administer it.



## SITE VISIT BRIEF — NEBRASKA

### Site visit information

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**Site visitors:** Irma Perez-Johnson and Claire Smither Wulsin

**Dates of visit:** December 10-11, 2013

**Locations visited:** Omaha Career Center, 5717 F Street, Omaha, NE

### Site summary

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Two members of the study team traveled to Omaha, Nebraska, for a 2-day visit with staff from the Nebraska Department of Labor (NE DOL). The visit took place at the Omaha Career Center, with state-level administrators driving in from Lincoln for the meetings. NE DOL houses both the Office of Unemployment Insurance (UI) and the Office of Employment and Training, which oversees Wagner-Peyser (WP) staff. All UI staff are located in one call center in Lincoln, whereas WP staff are located in the 15 American Job Centers (AJCs) across the state.

Nebraska's Emergency Unemployment Compensation Act of 2008 (EUC08) Reemployment Services and Reemployment Eligibility Assessment (RES/REA) program balanced the efficiency of group orientations with the personalization of one-on-one follow-up meetings. WP frontline staff took the lead in implementing the program, facilitating the one-hour, large-group orientations and scheduling claimants for one-on-one sessions afterward (often on different days). During the follow-up meetings, claimants received other required services (that is, personalized labor market information, review of their completed skills assessment, and eligibility review). Nebraska reported serving a high volume of claimants by leveraging its current WP staff and hiring temporary staff.

### Highlights from the site visit

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- **The existing UI REA program (called Extended Services Program, or ESP) made it possible for Nebraska to modify the basic format rather than create an entirely new RES/REA program.** Administrators were able to build on the foundation of policies and frontline staff knowledge when rolling out the EUC08 RES/REA program, enabling the state to ramp up program services more quickly than it would have otherwise. Staff were also able to leverage technology already in place for the UI REA program. Initially, experienced WP staff were responsible for implementing the EUC08 RES/REA program. However, after the program was extended, temporary staff were brought in so WP staff could return to their regular duties.
- **The state made ongoing eligibility for EUC08 benefits fully contingent on fulfilling RES/REA requirements.** Departing from the rules for regular UI benefits, Nebraska deemed claimants ineligible for any EUC08 benefits if they did not fully comply with EUC08 RES/REA program requirements. EUC08 claimants were automatically scheduled for their required program orientation and could reschedule only once within 10 days of the original appointment and only if they provided an allowable excuse (such as attending a job interview). Other reasons for rescheduling (such as child care or transportation difficulties) could trigger referral to UI staff for adjudication, and claimants could not receive further EUC08 benefits until the issue was resolved. Furthermore, regular UI claimants could be deemed ineligible for one week of benefits if they did not meet their

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work search requirement of two employer contacts for the week. The same work search requirement applied to EUC08 claimants, and WP staff checked that employer contacts were appropriately entered into the claimant's log. If any of the required pieces of information were missing (date of contact, name of organization and person contacted, employer's address and telephone number, position applied for, and method of contact), the WP staff member placed an issue flag on the claimant's record, thus referring the case to UI staff for adjudication. EUC08 claimants could not receive further benefits until the issue was resolved.

- **There was a clear divide between WP and UI roles and responsibilities for the EUC08 RES/REA program.** WP state-level staff designed the program with input from the UI state-level staff, and WP frontline staff were largely responsible for implementing it. UI staff (who are not colocated and do not interact regularly with WP staff) were responsible for processing claims and benefits, adjudicating potential issues, and rescheduling noncompliant EUC08 claimants for their program orientations.
- **The temporary nature of EUC08 influenced decisions on technology and staffing.** When planning to implement the EUC08 RES/REA program, state-level administrators decided to adapt current data systems rather than invest in upgrades, which were considered too costly for a short-term program. Similarly, state-level administrators decided to bring on temporary staff rather than hire additional permanent staff to implement the program.
- **The Federal funding for the EUC08 RES/REA program was deemed insufficient to fully cover the costs of providing program services.** WP administrators indicated that they had covered the additional costs out of their existing WP operating budgets, but this meant that other regularly provided reemployment services were delayed or displaced.
- **In reaction to claimants' positive responses to the EUC08 RES/REA program, Nebraska plans to make similar services available to all job seekers.** WP frontline staff and administrators indicated that claimants responded very favorably to the orientations, which brought them into the AJCs, helped familiarize them with AJC resources, and provided an opportunity to interact with other unemployed job seekers. Partly because of this positive response, the state has developed plans for a new program, NE-RES, which would make RES/REA-like services mandatory for all UI recipients and use a similar format to deliver RES to AJC customers.

## SITE VISIT BRIEF — NEW HAMPSHIRE

### Site visit information

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**Site visitors:** Samina Sattar and Irma Perez-Johnson

**Date of visit:** December 4, 2013

**Locations visited:** NH Employment Security and NH Works One-Stop, 10 West St., Concord, NH

### Site summary

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Two members of the study team traveled to Concord, New Hampshire, for a one-day visit with staff in the New Hampshire Employment Security (NHES) agency, located at the local NH Works One-Stop center. NHES houses both the Unemployment Compensation (UC) Bureau, which oversees Unemployment Insurance (UI) and emergency benefits claims, and the Employment Services (ES) Bureau, which oversees Wagner-Peyser, Trade Act, and veterans' services delivered through the American Job Centers (AJCs).

The Emergency Unemployment Compensation Act of 2008 (EUC08) Reemployment Services and Reemployment Eligibility Assessment (RES/REA) program in New Hampshire was notable for its efforts to streamline service delivery while maintaining a commitment to in-person contact with clients. Non-exempt EUC08 claimants were first asked to attend a group orientation, held at an AJC, which introduced them to the EUC08 RES/REA program and its requirements. Attendance at the orientation varied weekly and by office, but 10 to 20 claimants were scheduled for each week's session in each office, including claimants who missed their original orientation dates. About 50 percent of claimants missed their first scheduled orientations and were automatically rescheduled for the next one. The orientation session, which lasted about an hour, included a staff presentation and additional time for questions and answers. After the orientation, claimants were scheduled to attend a group workshop at which they received labor market information, reviewed (or completed) their skills assessments, and received additional, individualized help with their job search. They also had their work search reviewed one-on-one. EUC08 claimants who attended the group orientation and workshop were deemed to have satisfied their RES/REA participation requirement.

### Highlights from the site visit

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- **The existence of a UI REA program in New Hampshire is widely viewed as an important facilitator for implementation of the EUC08 RES/REA program.** A major reason for this is the availability of ES staff, who were already cross-trained on UI procedures and experienced in working with UI claimants.
- **The UC and ES bureaus work closely to deliver services to EUC08 claimants.** ES staff are the first point of contact for EUC08 claimants and are thoroughly trained on EUC08 program rules, so they can answer basic questions about EUC08 eligibility, payments, and RES/REA program requirements; review work-search activities; and identify eligibility concerns if any exist. UI specialists collocated in the AJCs handle adjudication issues and more complex questions related to EUC08 claims.

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- **New Hampshire instituted a work-search requirement for non-exempt EUC08 claimants that is more intensive than the requirement for regular UI claimants.** This move might have helped compel participation in the RES/REA program. UI claimants are generally required to demonstrate “reasonable effort” in their work search, which in practice means two employer contacts per week. For EUC08 claimants, this was increased to five per week, including two completely new contacts. Before the orientation, the cross-trained ES staff review EUC08 claimants’ work-search activities for their first two claim weeks. Claimants who do not fully meet the work search requirement for one of the two weeks are given a work search warning and informed about the warning during orientation; those who do not meet the requirement for both weeks are referred to a UI adjudicator for a more formal review of their work search activities and could have their EUC08 claim(s) denied.
  - **New Hampshire adopted a group format for all services offered to EUC08 claimants.** The state began the RES/REA program with one-on-one initial RES/REA meetings for all EUC08 claimants, but soon encountered challenges scheduling large numbers of claimants for individual eligibility reviews with the existing staff. Then the state received approval from the U.S. Department of Labor to conduct eligibility reviews one-on-one by calling claimants out of a group workshop. RES/REA staff reported that the group sessions provide some benefits to participants by enabling them to network, share resources, and receive peer support from other job seekers facing similar challenges.
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## SITE VISIT BRIEF — WASHINGTON

### Site visit information

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**Site visitor:** Claire Smither Wulsin

**Dates of visit:** December 12-13, 2013

**Locations visited:** Washington State Employment Security Department (212 Maple Park Avenue, SE, Olympia, WA) and WorkSource Thurston County (1570 Irving Street, SW, Tumwater, WA)

### Site summary

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A member of the study team traveled to Washington State for a 2-day visit with staff in the Washington Employment Security Department, which houses both Wagner-Peyser (WP) staff and Unemployment Insurance (UI) staff. There are 67 WorkSource sites in Washington, including 28 comprehensive American Job Centers (all employment and training services available on site), 30 affiliates (most services available on site), and 9 connection sites (such as public libraries, where dedicated computers and printers are available).

WP and UI staff reported collaborating closely to plan Washington's Emergency Unemployment Compensation Act of 2008 (EUC08) Reemployment Services and Reemployment Eligibility Assessment (RES/REA) program, though they reported not having had a strong history of collaboration. WP and UI policy staff worked with programming staff to create a system that would streamline the program's administration, thus minimizing the burden on frontline staff. Claimants were automatically scheduled for a group orientation at their local WorkSource sites through the existing WP computer system. The frequency of program orientations varied across sites; in the site the study team visited, orientations were held three or four times each week, with an average of 80 claimants scheduled each week. Claimants submitted their work search logs when they arrived at the WorkSource site. One WP staff member checked the logs to ensure that claimants had completed the required three job search contacts or activities each week, and another led the orientation. The orientation included information on services available at the WorkSource site, local area labor market information, and instructions on completing online occupational skills assessments. After the 40-minute presentation, claimants met individually with staff to discuss their work search logs, as well as any other services staff thought might support a claimant's job search. EUC08 claimants who attended the group presentation and had a satisfactory work search log were deemed to have satisfied their RES/REA participation requirement.

### Highlights from the site visit

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- **State-level UI and WP staff worked across division lines to successfully plan and manage the EUC08 RES/REA program.** In planning the EUC08 RES/REA program, WP and UI staff, including administrators and programming staff, met early and worked together throughout the process. Department staff jointly created a customer flow chart, assigning each step in the process to an electronic process, WP staff, or UI staff. This collaborative strategy required a considerable up-front time investment, but staff uniformly agreed that it enabled them to quickly coordinate and implement each step in the RES/REA program.

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- **The state reallocated existing WP staff resources to implement the EUC08 RES/REA program.** Despite the large increase in services and claimant-staff contacts required by the program, the state used mostly existing WP staff to execute the program, hiring only a few temporary staff. Because WP frontline staff already knew about UI policies and procedures from their experiences implementing the Worker Profiling and Reemployment Services (WPRS) and UI REA programs, they were asked to reallocate their hours away from those programs to focus on the influx of EUC08 RES/REA claimants.
  - **The existing computer system’s capabilities and flexibility were instrumental in the program’s success.** State-level staff were able to build on the system in place for the UI REA program for both scheduling and Federal reporting, rather than creating an entirely new system. They added automated notification letters and scheduling features to the system to support EUC08 RES/REA services. For UI REA, frontline WP staff had been required to manually schedule claimants for meetings, but the state-level planning team decided to automate scheduling for EUC08 claimants, prioritizing staff time with claimants over administrative tasks. They also modified the existing system to support the additional reporting and monitoring requirements of the EUC08 RES/REA program.
  - **The state experienced high attendance for EUC08 RES/REA orientations.** Based on regular UI REA program and WPRS orientation attendance, the site predicted a 60 percent attendance rate, but experienced an 80 percent rate for EUC08 orientations. The state had a strict sanction policy for RES/REA participation. A claimant who did not attend the scheduled orientation was ineligible for benefits until he or she had fully participated. A claimant who did not have a satisfactory work search log was required to report the following week for an additional work search review. A claimant who failed the second review was called in for an “all-weeks” review of all work search logs for the whole of the UI claims. State staff also believed that printing EUC08 RES/REA notification letters on brightly colored paper could have contributed to the higher participation.
  - **When feasible, multiple simultaneous presentations were held to accommodate all attendees.** Physical space was a major challenge in the state’s WorkSource sites, which were not designed to handle the volume of claimants eligible for EUC08 RES/REA services. In some cases, conference rooms were too small for the entire EUC08 group; when possible, additional staff were asked to help with the volume, and groups of claimants were allocated among several staff for separate concurrent presentations.
  - **The state’s experience with the EUC08 RES/REA program influenced its implementation of the UI REA program.** The state decided to amend its UI REA program based on the EUC08 experience, moving from a completely one-on-one program to a group orientation, followed by one-on-one services.

## SITE VISIT BRIEF — WEST VIRGINIA

### **Site visit information**

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**Site visitor:** Claire Smither Wulsin

**Dates of visit:** December 18-19, 2013

**Locations visited:** Workforce West Virginia state office (112 California Avenue, Charleston, WV) and Charleston American Job Center (1321 Plaza East, Charleston, WV)

### **Site summary**

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A member of the study team traveled to Charleston, West Virginia, for a two-day visit with staff in the Workforce West Virginia state office, which houses both Employer Services (Wagner-Peyser [WP] staff) and Unemployment Compensation (Unemployment Insurance [UI] staff). There are 58 Workforce sites in West Virginia, including comprehensive American Job Centers (AJCs), satellite sites (offering core and some intensive services), and affiliate sites (offering at least core services).

West Virginia was able to build on its advantages as a small state to make its Emergency Unemployment Compensation Act of 2008 (EUC08) Reemployment Services and Reemployment Eligibility Assessment (RES/REA) program successful. It continued providing in-person services as it does with the regular UI program, adapted general AJC services to this population, and kept staff resources flexible. Instead of offering a separate orientation for the EUC08 RES/REA program, the state required participants to attend the general, 45- to 60-minute group orientations offered at the AJC for all job seekers, which include information on services available in the AJC and skills assessments available to claimants. The AJC visited by the study team member offered the orientation three times per week. Immediately after the orientation, EUC08 claimants attended a one-on-one meeting with WP staff about services targeted to them, which included a review of their work search log, industry-specific labor market information, and any additional services the frontline staff thought would be helpful for the claimant's job search. The one-on-one meeting could last from 15 to 60 minutes, depending on the needs of the claimant. EUC08 claimants who attended the group orientation and the one-on-one meeting and had a satisfactory work search log (one job search activity per week) were deemed to have satisfied their EUC08 RES/REA program participation requirement.

### **Highlights from the site visit**

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- **Staff attributed a high participation rate for the EUC08 RES/REA program to UI claimants' early exposure to the AJCs through UI claims filing and strict program participation requirements.** Staff reported that attendance at West Virginia's group presentations was high (about 95 percent). Regular UI claimants file their initial claims in person at an AJC, and claimants were likely to be familiar with the AJC location and staff before becoming eligible for EUC08 benefits. As a result, WP state and frontline staff think that less effort was required to get claimants in the AJC to participate in EUC08 RES/REA services, compared with states where claimants might not have been to an AJC before. In addition, the state's strict UI REA program rules deny benefits to claimants until they fulfill the participation requirement; this was carried through to the EUC08 RES/REA program and could have contributed to high participation in both programs.

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- **The flexibility afforded by cross-trained frontline staff contributed to the success of the EUC08 RES/REA program.** The state did not hire many temporary frontline staff; rather, it asked existing UI and WP staff to allocate a portion of their time to the EUC08 RES/REA program. These staff brought with them their knowledge and expertise about other reemployment services offered in the AJC. UI and WP staff are colocated in the AJCs and are cross-trained in each program. UI staff in the AJCs were responsible for adjudication of EUC08 claims. Frontline WP staff were flexible in helping EUC08 claimants meet their participation requirements, adjusting the timing for the group presentation to accommodate individual schedules or offering a one-on-one presentation if a claimant could not attend a regularly scheduled session. Having multiple staff members trained on the AJC presentation provided scheduling flexibility and enabled the staff to schedule additional claimants more easily.
  - **The state used the existing computer system for the EUC08 RES/REA program to streamline implementation, reporting, and monitoring, rather than creating a new system.** WP frontline staff were accustomed to scheduling claimants manually for the UI REA program and the Eligibility Review Program, which randomly selects a number of UI claimants for in-person eligibility reviews. The state-level planning team decided to automate scheduling for EUC08 claimants to reduce staff members' time on administrative tasks. Staff were also able to utilize the existing computer system to automatically mail letters to claimants and track EUC08 RES/REA program participants for Federal reporting and monitoring purposes.
  - **Some state and frontline staff thought that the services provided through the EUC08 RES/REA program were delivered too late for most claimants.** Some staff at the state and local levels expressed views that (1) EUC08 RES/REA services were too late to effectively help claimants and (2) its UI REA program, which is targeted to claimants most likely to be reemployed quickly, provides services before most claimants are ready to participate seriously. One option suggested by some staff was to combine the UI REA and EUC08 RES/REA programs into one program that would be offered around week 12 of a claimant's unemployment spell, so that claimants would feel the urgency of finding a job but not yet be long-term unemployed and thus less attractive to employers.



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