

TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT NOTICE	NO. 26-22
	DATE May 12, 2023

TO: STATE WORKFORCE AGENCIES

FROM: BRENT PARTON /s/
Acting Assistant Secretary

SUBJECT: Availability of the Unemployment Insurance (UI) Equitable Access Toolkit

1. **Purpose.** To inform State Workforce Agencies (SWAs) of the release of a new toolkit published on WorkforceGPS under the UI Community of Practice (COP). This toolkit, created as part of American Rescue Plan Act UI Modernization, provides SWAs with actionable solutions for common and emerging issues related to equitable access to unemployment compensation (UC) programs.
2. **Action Requested.** The U.S. Department of Labor's (Department) Employment and Training Administration (ETA) requests that SWA Administrators provide information contained in this Training and Employment Notification (TEN) to all staff and ensure these staff have access to the UI COP on the WorkforceGPS webpage (<https://www.workforcegps.org>) by creating an account or logging in to view exclusive content. SWAs can access the toolkit directly at https://www.workforcegps.org/resources/2023/04/UI_Content/Public_Equitable_Access_Toolkit.
3. **Summary and Background.**
 - a. Summary – To help states identify and address barriers that workers face when seeking to access UI benefits, this TEN announces the Department's publication of the UI Equitable Access Toolkit. The Department has been actively developing ways to assist states in promoting equitable access to UC programs for all workers. This toolkit has been developed based on the Department's learnings from its UI Tiger Team engagements with SWAs across the country. It is intended to be used as a resource to develop initiatives and refine strategies towards the goal of promoting equitable access to UC programs.

This new toolkit is available on the WorkforceGPS UI COP website. States are encouraged to explore the content and apply all applicable steps within their programs.

- b. Background – On March 11, 2021, the President signed the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) into law (Public Law (Pub. L.) 117-2). Section 9032, ARPA, creates a new Section 2118 of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act (Pub.

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L. 116-136) and provides for a \$2,000,000,000 appropriation to the Secretary of Labor (Secretary) to detect and prevent fraud, to promote equitable access, and to ensure timely payment of benefits to eligible workers with respect to UC programs. Such funds may be used for federal administrative costs; system-wide infrastructure investment and development; and to make grants to states or territories administering UC programs for such purposes, including the establishment of procedures or the building of infrastructure to verify or validate identity, implement federal guidance regarding fraud detection and prevention, and accelerate claims processing or process claims backlogs due to the pandemic. States are encouraged to visit the UI Modernization webpage at www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/ui-modernization for more information.

On August 17, 2021, the Department issued Unemployment Insurance Program Letter (UIPL) No. 23-21, announcing the availability of funding for activities that promote equitable access to UC programs.

On November 2, 2021, the Department issued UIPL No. 02-22, to notify states of the availability of up to \$200 million available in funding to support states with improving UC systems and processes following a consultative assessment with a team of experts (i.e., UI Tiger Teams) provided by the Department. On September 19, 2022, the Department issued UIPL No. 02-22, Change 2, to notify states that the deadline for expressing interest in the grant opportunity was being extended to March 31, 2023. ETA has observed promising recommendations through UI Tiger Team engagements and will utilize the UI COP to share these observations.

Established in 2011, the UI COP provides a means for ETA and states to communicate important information and share promising practices and program improvements. The UI COP is a private community available exclusively to state and federal UI practitioners. See TEN No. 18-11.

4. **Resources**

- a. **UI Equitable Access Toolkit** – The new “UI Equitable Access Toolkit” is hosted on ETA’s knowledge-sharing site, WorkforceGPS (<https://www.workforcegps.org>). Through the UI Tiger Team engagements, ETA has made recommendations addressing common and emerging issues related to equitable access in UC programs. In a step-by-step approach, this toolkit provides an overview of promising practices to address and remove common barriers that make it difficult for people to access UI benefits. This toolkit can be accessed directly at: https://www.workforcegps.org/resources/2023/04/UI_Content/Public_Equitable_Access_Toolkit. This UI Equitable Access Toolkit is also publicly available through the Department’s Unemployment Insurance Modernization website at www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/ui-modernization.
- b. **State Support for Equitable Access Projects** – The UI Equitable Access Toolkit can guide states’ actions to improve equitable access to UC programs. Also, the Department recognizes that states may have capacity limitations in executing multiple grant projects, including those which focus on modernization initiatives and aim to promote equitable

access to UC programs. To provide additional support and increase state capacity, the Department is making operational and technical resources available to help states execute ARPA formula grant projects, including such projects as those focused on ensuring equitable access to the UC programs. See UIPL No. 03-23 for more information on available resources and services for ARPA formula grant projects.

- c. **Stay in the Know** – To automatically receive updates when new information and more promising recommendations are posted, ensure staff are registered for UI COP by having them visit the website at:
<https://www.workforcegps.org/login?returnUrl=https://www.workforcegps.org/user/myprofile/my-communities>.

5. **Inquiries.** Please direct inquiries to the appropriate ETA Regional Office.

6. **References.**

- American Rescue Plan Act, Pub L. 117-2, enacted March 11, 2021;
- Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act (Pub. L. 116-136), including Title II Subtitle A, Relief for Workers Affected by Coronavirus Act, enacted March 27, 2020;
- UIPL No. 03-23, *Availability of U.S. Department of Labor (Department) Funded Resources and Services to State American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Grantees*, issued March 6, 2023, <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/advisories/uipl-03-23>;
- UIPL No. 02-22, *Grant Opportunity to Support States Following a Consultative Assessment for Fraud Detection and Prevention, Promoting Equitable Access, and Ensuring the Timely Payment of Benefits, including Backlog Reduction, for all Unemployment Compensation (UC) Programs*, issued November 2, 2021, <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/advisories/unemployment-insurance-program-letter-no-02-22>;
- UIPL No. 02-22, Change 1, *Extension of Time for States to Express Interest in the Grant Opportunity Announced in Unemployment Insurance Program Letter (UIPL) No. 2-22 to Support States Following a Consultative Assessment for Fraud Detection and Prevention, Promoting Equitable Access, and Ensuring the Timely Payment of Benefits, including Backlog Reduction, for all Unemployment Compensation (UC) Programs*, issued February 16, 2022, <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/advisories/unemployment-insurance-program-letter-no-02-22-change-1>;
- UIPL No. 02-22, Change 2, *Extension of Time for States to Express Interest in the Grant Opportunity Announced in Unemployment Insurance Program Letter (UIPL) No. 02-22, to Support States Following a Consultative Assessment for Fraud Detection and Prevention, Promoting Equitable Access, and Ensuring the Timely Payment of Benefits, including Backlog Reduction, for all Unemployment Compensation (UC) Programs*, issued September 19, 2022, <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/advisories/uipl-02-22-change-2>;
- UIPL No. 23-21, *Grant Opportunity for Promoting Equitable Access to Unemployment Compensation (UC) Programs*, issued August 17, 2021,

<https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/advisories/unemployment-insurance-program-letter-no-23-21>;

- UIPL No. 02-16, *State Responsibilities for Ensuring Access to Unemployment Insurance Benefits*, issued October 1, 2015, <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/advisories/unemployment-insurance-program-letter-no-02-16>;
- UIPL No. 02-16, Change 1, *State Responsibilities for Ensuring Access to Unemployment Insurance Benefits, Services, and Information*, issued May 11, 2020, <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/advisories/unemployment-insurance-program-letter-no-02-16-change-1>;
- UIPL No. 11-14, *Collection and Analysis of Claimant Demographic Data*, issued May 15, 2014, <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/advisories/unemployment-insurance-program-letter-no11-14>;
- TEN No. 24-22, *New Unemployment Insurance (UI) Tiger Team Promising Recommendations Resource Pages Available on WorkforceGPS*, issued April 17, 2023, <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/advisories/ten-24-22>;
- TEN No. 18-11, *Unemployment Insurance (UI) Community of Practice (COP)*, issued November 30, 2011, <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/advisories/training-and-employment-notice-no-18-11>; and
- UI Modernization webpage, <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/ui-modernization>.

7. **Attachment(s)**. Not Applicable.