

TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT NOTICE	NO. 05-24
	DATE August 21, 2024

TO: STATE WORKFORCE AGENCIES

FROM: JOSÉ JAVIER RODRÍGUEZ
Assistant Secretary



SUBJECT: Additional Technical Assistance Resources Available to Support State Implementation of Projects Funded by the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)

1. **Purpose.** To notify states that the Department of Labor’s (Department) is making available technical resources and services through the National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA) to support implementation of ARPA-funded projects.
2. **Action Requested.** The Department’s Employment and Training Administration (ETA) requests State Workforce Administrators provide the information contained in this Training and Employment Notice (TEN) to appropriate program and other staff in the state Unemployment Insurance (UI) system.
3. **Summary and Background.**
 - a. Summary – This TEN notifies states that the Department is making technical assistance resources available in partnership with NASWA to support the implementation of ARPA-funded projects – including support for project development, project management, and project execution, to the extent such activities have not already been funded by the ARPA grants for which this assistance is being provided. Additional explanation of potential support items and next steps for interested states is provided below.
 - b. Background – The UI program is a vital safety net for unemployed workers and an economic stabilizer for communities impacted by unemployment events. The Department published *Building Resilience: A plan for transforming unemployment insurance* (UI Transformation Plan)¹ in April 2024 to detail the activities and strategies the Department is pursuing to transform the UI system, in response to the US Government Accountability Office (GAO) placing the UI system on its High Risk List² in June 2022.³

¹ UI Transformation Plan: https://oui.doleta.gov/unemploy/transformation_plan.asp.

² GAO High Risk List: <https://www.gao.gov/high-risk-list>.

³ GAO-22-105162, *Unemployment Insurance: Transformation Needed to Address Program Design, Infrastructure, and Integrity Risks*, published June 2022, <https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-22-105162.pdf>.

As discussed in the UI Transformation Plan, the Department awarded over \$783 million in grants directly to states under ARPA to: (1) detect and prevent fraud; (2) to promote equitable access; and (3) to ensure timely payment of benefits to eligible workers with respect to Unemployment Compensation (UC) programs.⁴ See Unemployment Insurance Program Letter (UIPL) Nos. 22-21, 23-21, 02-22, 11-22, and 11-23. States, in collaboration with the Department’s Tiger Team initiative described in UIPL No. 02-22, have identified a number of projects to drive meaningful improvement in their service delivery. Although many of these grants have periods of performance that will continue into future years, this one-time investment under ARPA and during the relatively stable current labor market create an urgency for states to act now in implementing these improvements.

As described in UIPL No. 03-23, the Department recognizes that states may have capacity limitations in executing multiple significant grant projects simultaneously and is committed to assisting with project execution of ARPA-related grant projects. Utilization of the additional Department-funded resources and services through engagement with NASWA may help to expedite implementation, increase the impact of grant projects, and should not impact the maximum grant awards available to the states. The Department, through its Cooperative Agreement with the State of Maryland, has partnered with NASWA to provide technical assistance directly to the Department and to states in support of ongoing ARPA activities.

- 4. Implementation Support Resources for ARPA-Funded Projects.** As part of its technical assistance strategy, the Department has requested NASWA’s UI State Engagement Team (Team) to provide interested states with technical support on ARPA-funded projects (including Tiger Teams, Equity, Integrity and IT modernization grants). These resources provide cross-functional subject matter expertise across all UI programmatic areas, further complementing the technical assistance and oversight/monitoring of grants provided by ETA.

NASWA’s services may be customized to provide tailored project implementation support to meet states’ specific needs. The Team’s combined UI program knowledge, state experience, and project execution experience put NASWA in a unique position to provide subject matter expertise beyond technical implementation, with advanced expertise in the areas of Project Management, State Information Data Exchange System (SIDES), Integrity Data Hub (IDH), Behavioral Insights (BI)⁵, and Interstate Connection Network (ICON).

⁴ These grants were awarded under the appropriation provided to the Secretary of Labor in Section 9032 of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), enacted on March 11, 2021. This amount was later reduced from \$2 billion to \$1 billion with enactment of the Fiscal Responsibility Act (Pub. L. 118-5) on June 3, 2023.

⁵ BI offers a framework for understanding people’s behaviors and choices, including the motivators and tendencies which underlie the decisions they make. Governments increasingly are using BI to develop strategies, revise messaging, and make changes to design to improve customer experience and achieve program outcomes. Since 2019, the UI Integrity Center has been supporting states with BI by providing behavioral science information, expertise, and evidence-based insights for states seeking to achieve better outcomes on challenging program problems. In 2021, the UI Integrity Center launched the [BI Toolkit](#), which is a collection of resources, articles, templates, and how-to information developed to help state UI agencies apply the learnings of BI within their UI programs (see TEN No. 15-21, referenced below).

Benefits of NASWA State Support Services, which are available to states at no cost, include:

- A comprehensive review of program and technology processes by UI and Technical Subject Matter Experts;
- Reduced strain on state internal staff resources;
- Sustainable project momentum; and
- Capitalization of successful strategies from other states.

Available service components are described further below and include, but are not limited to, project development, project management, project execution.

- a. **Project Development:** NASWA staff will partner with state UI Leadership to evaluate ARPA-funded project plans, funding streams, resources, and priorities, which may include:
 - A comprehensive review of existing projects and procedures;
 - Detailed analysis of workflow and processes;
 - Development of milestones and deliverables across project plans;
 - Identifying operational needs, risks, and overlaps in project implementation and strategic goals;
 - Producing a customized implementation plan, keeping the state's capabilities, capacity, and resources in mind;
 - Assisting in identifying quick wins aligned with the state's overall priorities;
 - Aid in technical solutions to meet the project's needs;
 - Providing NASWA Services to complement the state's strategic goals; and
 - Assist in developing appropriate metrics for project evaluation.
- b. **Project Management:** NASWA collaborates with state UI agencies to create a customized plan using proven methodologies to:
 - Create project charters that define the scope and goals;
 - Develop project plans that identify work phases, deliverables, and activities;
 - Assemble specialized teams to support project execution to accomplish objectives;
 - Generate reports and lead meetings to inform stakeholders of project status and risks;
 - Update documentation throughout the project lifecycle; and
 - Support BI including, help with expedited procurement, as appropriate.
- c. **Project Execution:** NASWA's diverse group of UI subject matter experts working closely with state staff can:
 - Lead meetings virtually or in-person to achieve objectives;
 - Facilitate learning sessions to support implementations, user testing, and process improvements;

- Provide subject matter expertise in UI technical and process improvement projects, including journey mapping, workflow development, and supporting creation of Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) documents;
- Engage NASWA Services' SIDES, IDH, BI, and ICON Subject Matter Experts to assist in technical implementations;
- Assist states in developing rules and requirements from the initiation of the project to the end;
- Build operational use cases to streamline processes and reduce technical projects backlog;
- Identify training opportunities and develop training plans for internal staff;
- Collaborate with states to define and execute testing objectives;
- Create external messaging campaigns, supported by NASWA's BI Team, to communicate project objectives using plain language; and
- Define and track measurable project outcomes that will demonstrate return on investment.

5. **Inquiries.** To request support from NASWA for any of the available service components listed above, contact integrity@naswa.org.

Please direct any questions regarding the information in this TEN and/or other technical assistance needs 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, enacted March 23, 2020;
- UIPL No. 11-23, *Announcement of Grant Opportunities and National Identity (ID) Verification Offering under the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)*, issued July 13, 2023, <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/advisories/uipl-11-23>;
- 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 11-22, *Grant Opportunity for States to Participate in the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Unemployment Insurance (UI) Navigator Program*, issued January 31, 2022, <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/advisories/unemployment-insurance-program-letter-no-11-22>;
- 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. 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. 22-21, *Grant Opportunity to Support States with Fraud Detection and Prevention, Including Identity Verification and Overpayment Recovery Activities, in All Unemployment Compensation (UC) Programs*, issued August 11, 2021, <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/advisories/unemployment-insurance-program-letter-no-22-21>; and
- TEN No. 15-21, *Announcing the National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA) Unemployment Insurance (UI) Integrity Center's Behavioral Insights Toolkit*, issued November 17, 2021, <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/advisories/training-and-employment-notice-no-15-21>.

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