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ADVISORY: UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE PROGRAM LETTER NO. 13-15

TO: STATE WORKFORCE AGENCIES

FROM: PORTIA WU /s/
Assistant Secretary

SUBJECT: Fiscal Year (FY) 2015 Unemployment Insurance (UI) Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) Grants

1. **Purpose.** To provide guidelines for the new FY 2015 UI RESEA (replacing the UI Reemployment and Eligibility Assessment (REA)) grants and to: 1) invite state workforce agencies to submit proposals for FY 2015 RESEA funding; 2) explain the differences between the traditional UI REA program and the new RESEA program, including the new flexibility that enables the funds to be used for both traditional REA activities and reemployment services (also called career services); 3) announce that FY 2015 will be a transition year to enable states to make the necessary changes to existing programs; 4) announce the U.S. Department of Labor's (Department) intent to add a performance measurement of the RESEA program using the integrated workforce system's common measures; and 5) encourage states, as they begin planning implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), to consider how to most effectively leverage the state's RESEA program.

2. **References.**

- Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2015, Pub. L. No. 113-235;
- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014, Pub. L. No. 113- 128;
- Unemployment Insurance Program Letter (UIPL) No. 10-14, *Fiscal Year (FY) 2014 Unemployment Insurance (UI) Reemployment and Eligibility Assessment (REA) Grants*;
- Information Collection Request for the ETA 9128, Reemployment and Eligibility Assessment Workloads Report, and the ETA 9129, Reemployment and Eligibility Assessments Outcomes Report (OMB number 1205-0456);
- Employment and Training (ET) Handbook No. 401, 4th Edition, *Revised ET Handbook No. 401, Unemployment Insurance Reports Handbook*;
- ET Handbook No. 402, 5th Edition, *Revised ET Handbook No. 402, Unemployment Insurance Reports (UIR) User Manual – Web Version*;
- Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) No. 36-11, *Announcement of American Job Center Network*;

RESCISSIONS None	EXPIRATION DATE Continuing
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- Training and Employment Notice (TEN) No. 31-09, *Cross-Program Collaboration for Reemployment and Eligibility Assessment (REA) Grants*;
- Webinar - *Nevada's Reemployment and Eligibility Assessment (REA) Program and Minnesota's Advanced REA Automation Tool*, available at <https://www.workforce3one.org>; and
- Webinar - *Reemployment and Eligibility Assessment (REA) Program Innovations in Tennessee and Utah*, available at <https://www.workforce3one.org>.

3. **Background.** The federal-state UI program provides an important core service in the comprehensive, integrated workforce system established under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), which was recently revised by WIOA. Through the UI program, individuals, who have lost employment through no fault of their own and have earned sufficient wage credits, may receive UI benefits if they meet initial and continued UI eligibility requirements. The Department and participating state UI workforce agencies have been striving to address individual reemployment needs of UI claimants, and to prevent and detect UI improper payments, through the voluntary UI REA program since 2005. Both activities are high priorities for the Department's Employment and Training Administration (ETA). The UI REA program has provided claimants entry to a full array of reemployment services available at American Job Centers (AJCs), and has helped to ensure that claimants comply with all UI eligibility requirements. Individuals filing UI claims are active job seekers who, through the state's UI REA program, are made aware of the wide variety of reemployment services that are available to them. They are referred to reemployment services appropriate for their individual needs. In FY 2014, a total of 44 states operated a UI REA program. These states are referred to as "continuing states" in this UIPL. Several of these continuing states are participating in the Department's evaluation of the UI REA program.

The Department requested additional discretionary funds to build on the success of the UI REA program by providing reemployment services in addition to UI eligibility assessments and other UI REA activities (see section 8.A. of this UIPL). The Department explained its intent to use these funds for a RESEA program to target profiled UI claimants identified as most likely to exhaust their benefits and all transitioning veterans receiving Unemployment Compensation for Ex-Servicemembers (UCX) as these populations may have more barriers to reemployment.

The Department received new appropriations authority that allows for funding of activities previously funded by the UI REA grant funds as well as reemployment services. This approach mimics the approach previously studied in Nevada that was shown to be successful that integrated provision of REAs with provision of reemployment services.

4. **FY 2015 Funding.** The Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2015, appropriates a minimum of \$80 million for UI RESEA funding in 2015 to conduct in-person reemployment and eligibility assessments and to provide reemployment services and referrals to training, as appropriate. The 2015 funding period will be nine months rather than twelve months, beginning April 1, 2015, and ending December 31, 2015. The 2015 appropriation allows for these funds to be expended for both traditional UI REA activities and for reemployment services, and these activities are referred to collectively in this UIPL as the

RESEA. States interested in implementing a RESEA program, with FY 2015 being considered a transition year, as explained below, may apply for this supplemental funding. States participating in the UI REA program evaluation, sponsored by the Department, should request FY 2015 funding associated with their UI REA evaluation design as well as up to \$100,000 for costs relating to transitioning to the new target population after the evaluation period ends.

- 5. Program Changes Beginning in FY 2015.** The RESEA program is replacing the UI REA program. States are strongly encouraged to begin making the necessary changes to transition their UI REA program to an RESEA program to target claimants most likely to exhaust their UI benefits and UCX claimants. The following information provides a summary of the key changes.
- Beginning in FY 2015, continuing states are encouraged to transition, or begin transitioning, their UI REA programs to an RESEA program and may request up to \$100,000 to implement program changes related to this transition. States that do not have a UI REA program (i.e., new states) are strongly encouraged to request funding to begin implementation of a RESEA program and the limit on transition funding does not apply to new states.
 - States may now use RESEA funding to support the traditional required UI REA activities and to provide reemployment services to which RESEA participants are referred. As continuing states (other than states participating in the Department's UI REA evaluation) transition to targeting claimants determined to be those most likely to exhaust their benefits and UCX claimants, states are also encouraged to provide more intensive services to these individuals as these populations may have more barriers to reemployment. The RESEA program should focus on providing career services that directly relate to the specific needs of the participating claimants. Continuing states may reduce the number of funded RESEAs compared to the prior year to accommodate the projected costs of providing more intensive career services. Services to be provided should be identified in the development or revision of the claimant's Individual Reemployment Plan. Claimants have a variety of needs based on their specific circumstances and the appropriate reemployment services should be provided to lead to successful employment outcomes, including referrals to education and training, if appropriate, to further actual reemployment goals. Because the same reemployment service types are not appropriate for all claimants, the individual needs of each claimant should be determined and the appropriate services provided.
 - Before FY 2015, claimants targeted for services under the Worker Profiling and Reemployment Services (WPRS) program could not be selected for a UI REA. Beginning in FY 2015, the Department encourages continuing states to transition to a new targeting methodology to allow individuals profiled as most likely to exhaust their benefits and UCX claimants to be selected and provided services under the RESEA program and requires new states to begin the RESEA program using this new targeting methodology. The Department intends that, in FY 2016, only claimants determined to be most likely to exhaust benefits under the methods established for the

state's WPRS program, and UCX claimants, will be selected for the RESEA program. States should ensure that their WPRS models use appropriate data elements that have been shown to accurately predict the likelihood of exhaustion in the state and the coefficients should be updated as needed. States needing technical assistance in reviewing their WPRS profiling models should contact their ETA regional office.

- If the state does not operate a statewide RESEA program, the state must continue to operate the WPRS program in geographic areas that are not served by the RESEA program.
- The period of performance for the FY 2015 grants will be a nine-month period from April 1, 2015 through December 31, 2015. This reduced performance period provides states, other than those states participating in the Department's UI REA evaluation, the option to use RESEA funding to deliver more intensive services that claimants determined to be most likely to exhaust benefits and UCX claimants may need and/or to cover the cost of reemployment services to RESEA participants. As noted above, continuing states may request up to \$100,000 to fund projected transition costs including costs related to the new targeting requirement. The new targeting requirement may be implemented by continuing states that are not participating in the UI REA evaluation beginning in FY 2015 and by all continuing states in FY 2016.
- Finally, the Department intends to use the new WIOA common measures as an additional means to review program outcomes. The Department will be providing the opportunity for notice and comment in the Federal Register as the new reporting and performance requirements are developed for the RESEA program. Input from states regarding this anticipated transition is welcome. The current UI REA reporting requirements will remain in effect for the duration of the FY 2015 grant and through FY 2016.

6. **RESEA and WIOA.** WIOA was enacted in July 2014, and it provides a new blueprint for the nation's public workforce system. Under WIOA, the UI program is a vital program within the workforce system and continues to be a mandatory One-stop partner in American Job Centers. In addition, UI claimants continue to be critical customers for the system. As states begin to engage partner programs to carry out strategic planning under WIOA, particularly as they consider service delivery design for their AJCs, they should consider how to most effectively leverage the RESEA program.

7. **FY 2015 RESEA Proposals for New and Continuing States.** RESEA proposal requirements have been designed for both new states and states that have previously operated a UI REA program. States should select the appropriate format.

A. New RESEA State Programs. Proposals for a RESEA program from states that have not implemented a UI REA program previously should provide the information described in Attachment A, *Unemployment Insurance (UI) Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) Proposal Outline for First Year RESEA Grants*, as well as an

abstract of the proposal containing the elements listed in Attachment B, *Elements of an Unemployment Insurance (UI) Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) Grant Proposal Abstract*. In the proposal, states should include only the information identified in this UIPL.

New state proposals should include start-up costs including estimated costs related to programming required reports based on the current UI REA Required Reports (Reemployment and Eligibility Assessments Workloads Report (ETA 9128) and Reemployment and Eligibility Assessments Outcomes Report (ETA 9129)). Additional reporting guidance for new states that are not currently operating a UI REA program will be forthcoming and states should not begin programming these reports until they have been approved and the new guidance is issued.

New states should budget for the obligation of RESEA funds within one year of the date of program implementation. This time period covers the time needed to design the program, develop reports and call in procedures, hire and train staff and subsequently begin serving claimants. The program implementation date is the date that the first RESEA participant in the state is scheduled to report to an AJC for a RESEA. This time period differs from the time period for continuing states, which ends December 31, 2015. States should notify the appropriate ETA regional office when the program has been implemented, as this date is needed for monitoring purposes. Many of the start-up costs, such as costs for programming required reports and training staff, will occur before the program has been implemented and should be included in the initial grant. Each RESEA grant will be based upon the start-up costs, the number of RESEAs that the new state proposes to schedule for the first grant period and the estimated costs provided by the new state to conduct the RESEA and provide allowable reemployment services.

- B. Continuing RESEA State Programs.** Proposals from states currently operating a UI REA program should provide an abstract of the proposal using Attachment B, *Elements of an Unemployment Insurance (UI) Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) Grant Proposal Abstract*, as well as the information requested in Attachment C, *Unemployment Insurance (UI) Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) Proposal Outline for States Continuing a RESEA Program*, and in Attachment D, *The Unemployment Insurance Reemployment and Eligibility Assessment (UI REA) Data Concerns for States with Current UI REA Grants*.

The performance period for FY 2015 RESEA grants to continuing states begins on April 1, 2015, and ends on December 31, 2015. This is the time during which the funds are expected to be obligated for activities described in the RESEA grant proposal. However, to allow for potential changes that might occur, the deadline specified by the Grant Officer on the Notice of Obligation for the obligation of these funds will be September 30, 2016. Funds must be liquidated within 90 days of that obligation deadline. All estimated cost figures for proposals for FY 2015 RESEA grants should be based on the time period ending December 30, 2015.

Each RESEA grant will be based upon the number of RESEAs that the continuing state proposes to schedule and the costs estimated by the state to provide RESEAs including allowable reemployment services. States that have not scheduled the number of UI REAs that were funded in FY 2014 should use the remaining FY 2014 funds to complete the projected UI REA workload and request funding for the balance of the FY 2015 RESEA grant period. All continuing RESEA states must determine whether any FY 2014 UI REA funds will not be obligated by March 31, 2015, provide this information in their FY 2015 RESEA grant application, and ensure that all FY 2014 UI REA funds are obligated under the 2014 UI REA guidelines before obligating FY 2015 RESEA funds.

Attachment D provides information about common data problems that may help states currently operating a UI REA program to write about the accuracy of their UI REA data. States must review their data with a focus on identifying any inaccurate data. The state's proposal must identify the errors in the quarterly ETA 9128 and the quarterly ETA 9129, describe the state's plans to correct the data, and provide a schedule of corrective actions.

States experiencing ongoing difficulties in reaching the UI REA workload projected in their FY 2014 UI REA proposals should request a lower level of RESEAs in FY 2015 than was requested in FY 2014.

Proposals will be reviewed based solely on the information required in the application. States should include only the required information.

C. States Participating in the UI REA Program Evaluation. Several continuing states are currently participating in a new evaluation of the UI REA program and the Department expects those states to continue with their planned UI REA program delivery in accordance with their agreed upon evaluation design for a minimum of 12 months. States participating in the UI REA evaluation may also request up to \$100,000 to plan for program changes for a transition to the new targeted population but should not implement these changes during the period of the UI REA evaluation.

- 8. Basic RESEA Guidelines.** RESEA funds must be used to assess the continued eligibility and reemployment needs of UI claimants. These funds may not supplant ongoing UI grant funds devoted to state UI eligibility review program activities.

States are not required to implement the RESEA program statewide. If a state does not implement RESEAs statewide, WPRS services must be provided in the geographic locations where RESEAs are not available. Also, the RESEAs are to be conducted only for UI claimants who do not have a definite return-to-work date. States should also exclude claimants who secure work only through a union hiring hall.

RESEA services may be delivered by UI staff, Wagner-Peyser staff, WIOA staff, or other AJC staff. The UI eligibility review is a key part of the RESEA for program integrity purposes. If UI staff members do not conduct the UI eligibility review, the service delivery staff must refer all issues to UI merit staff to adjudicate any potential UI eligibility issues identified during the RESEA. UI merit staff must maintain responsibility for adjudicating UI

eligibility issues, as appropriate. All eligibility determinations and redeterminations are funded through the regular funding for non-monetary determinations and not through the RESEA grant.

By applying for RESEA funding, states agree to integrate the RESEA program with WIA/WIOA and Wagner-Peyser funded reemployment services. WIOA collapses WIA “core and intensive activities” into combined “career services” and there is no required sequence for the delivery of services, which should allow job seekers to quickly access training. Career services are expected to be a key part of the success of the RESEA program. Each completed RESEA should include appropriate reemployment services and may include a referral to training; however RESEA funds may not be used to pay for training services.

UI staff must be engaged in RESEA planning, administration, and oversight as well as all appropriate staff training on UI eligibility requirements. While a full-time UI staff position is not required, UI staff must be available and involved in the RESEA functions previously discussed. States that have not had UI staff involvement in the UI REA program have experienced significant problems. In some instances, program staff delivering REAs had insufficient training to conduct a thorough eligibility review and detect eligibility issues requiring adjudication. This can result in improper payments. Further, many states that have not had sufficient UI staff participation have been unable to submit accurate ETA required reports. The ETA 9128 and ETA 9129 reports should be reviewed for accuracy each calendar quarter by the UI staff member of the RESEA team in addition to being reviewed by the RESEA team leader. Any resulting issues in the accuracy of the reports should be corrected and resubmitted within 90 days.

RESEA programs are an integral part of states’ strategies for delivering reemployment services. ETA encourages states to develop a career service delivery model to ensure that UI claimants served through the RESEA program receive an appropriate level of service suited to each individual claimant. The following guidelines also apply:

A. Required RESEA Services. Each RESEA must include the following minimum core components, which are essentially unchanged from FY 2014 UI REA components but require the development of a more focused individual reemployment plan to serve the needs of the claimant:

- UI eligibility assessment and referral to adjudication, as appropriate, if an issue or potential issue is identified;
- Requirement for the claimant to report to an AJC;
- The provision of labor market and career information that addresses the claimant’s specific needs;
- Registration with the state’s job bank;
- Orientation to AJC services;
- Development or revision of an individual reemployment plan that includes work search activities, accessing services provided through an AJC or using self-service tools, and/or approved training to which the claimant acknowledges agreement; and

- Referral to at least one reemployment service and/or referral to training if appropriate to the individual's needs.

States must provide each RESEA participant one-on-one service for the eligibility review and the development of an individual reemployment plan during the initial RESEA and during any subsequent RESEA. The individual reemployment plan must contain specific steps to which the claimant agrees including reporting to and participating in the reemployment service(s) determined to be most likely to result in reemployment or referral to career related training. During the discussion of the individual reemployment plan, specific labor market information should be provided, thus, ensuring that the claimant understands how labor market information can be used in an appropriate job search.

All states may provide reemployment services as a component of the RESEA in 2015, and states are strongly encouraged to integrate the delivery of reemployment services with the traditional REA activities.

- B. Service Delivery Design.** As stated above, while not mandated for FYI 2015, continuing states are strongly encouraged to consider transitioning their programs to target those most likely to exhaust benefits and UCX claimants; and all new states must target this new population. The Department will be hosting a training session addressing the development of an effective WPRS model and will continue to provide ongoing assistance to states to help ensure that their models are useful and accurate tools to select claimants who are most in need of assistance to avoid exhausting their benefits. Continuing states may also still exercise flexibility in determining who is selected for a RESEA using FY 2015 funding with the following exceptions that also apply to the new target populations: both claimants who have a definite return-to-work date and claimants who seek work solely through a union hiring hall must be excluded.

Both continuing states and new states have flexibility in identifying staffing options for the delivery of RESEAs. Different skill sets are needed to conduct the UI eligibility assessment than those needed to develop a reemployment plan and make appropriate referrals to reemployment services at AJCs and/or training. Whether the state decides to use UI, Wagner-Peyser, and/or WIA/WIOA staff to conduct RESEAs, states must ensure that the staff members assigned for each activity have the necessary training and that UI staff are involved in development of the staff training and delivery of such training, as appropriate. States are encouraged to consider designating the same staff to provide the required RESEA activities, including some or all of the reemployment services deemed appropriate for the individual claimant.

States that conduct multiple RESEAs for the same individual must provide cost estimates for both the initial and the subsequent RESEAs. In general, subsequent RESEAs require less time and resources because it is not necessary to repeat the orientation session. Subsequent RESEAs must include the traditional UI REA components: an eligibility review; review and updating of the claimant's individual reemployment plan; the provision of labor market information if changes so dictate; and referral to reemployment

services or training. These subsequent RESEAs should build upon the services provided in the initial RESEA and address the needs of the claimant at this later stage in the claim.

Once the state notifies a claimant that s/he has been selected for a RESEA, participation in the RESEA is mandatory. UI claimants must report in person to an AJC for staff-assisted services for the initial RESEA. If a subsequent RESEA is conducted by telephone, state RESEA staff must ensure that both they and the claimant have access to the claimant's individual reemployment plan for review and updating. The proposal must identify activities that are conducted by telephone and the associated costs. The claimant's activities must be reviewed, and any proposed changes, along with the concurrence of the claimant, must be documented.

Claimants who contact the appropriate agency before their RESEA appointment and request to change the scheduled RESEA date or time for good reason, such as scheduled job interviews, may be accommodated. They should be counted on the ETA 9128 only as a "scheduled RESEA" rather than as a "rescheduled RESEA," as explained in ET Handbook No. 401, Unemployment Insurance Reports Handbook.

If a claimant fails to report for any RESEA without notifying the state beforehand, the state must refer the issue of the claimant's failure to report to the appropriate UI staff to be adjudicated under state law.

States must report initial outcomes for 100 percent of the scheduled RESEAs that are reported on the ETA 9128 report. Each claimant scheduled for an RESEA will either participate in the RESEA or fail to participate; therefore, each scheduled REA must be reported as one of these two outcomes. Rescheduled RESEAs should be counted as another scheduled RESEA and the results reported when the claimant participates or fails to participate in the rescheduled RESEA.

States must select RESEA participants no later than the fifth week of the claim series and promptly schedule them for a RESEA. The fifth week in the claim series is the fourth week following the week in which the claimant files an initial claim. If the claimant has not yet established monetary eligibility for benefits or is not yet eligible because, for example, a nonmonetary issue is pending adjudication, the claimant may be selected during the first week that s/he claims benefits after being determined eligible for benefits. For continuing states that have not transitioned to the new target population, it is not required that claimants who are not initially eligible be included in the treatment or comparison group; reporting of comparison groups is not required for either new states or continuing states after they transition to the new target population.

Up to three RESEAs for each individual claimant may be funded by the RESEA grant. States should focus their RESEA programs on helping claimants return to work as quickly as possible by providing comprehensive guidance and assistance to claimants during the initial RESEA. During the initial and subsequent RESEAs, states must provide clear and complete information that claimants need to access appropriate

reemployment services. Additional RESEAs for an individual who has received the initial RESEA and two subsequent RESEAs cannot be funded under this grant.

Continuing States Transitioning to RESEA Targeting in 2015 and New States: Once continuing states have transitioned to serving the new targeted population and for new states, funding for each individual RESEA may be provided for up to five (5) hours of individual staff time per RESEA. Under the prior UI REA program, funding was limited to a maximum of two hours per UI REA. The three-hour increase for all RESEAs is to allow adequate time for the delivery of appropriate reemployment services that meet the needs of claimants in the RESEA program. This time includes all activities that are a part of the delivery of the RESEA, including the provision of reemployment services if the state elects to use RESEA funding to provide them, and the associated documentation of claims records and correspondence. Continuing states that are not transitioning to the target population and not requesting funding for reemployment services may request up to two hours to provide the required REA activities. All staffing costs should be calculated based on the direct time charges per activity. Costs for activities that involve multiple claimants are calculated on the basis of the time that is required for the activity and the number of claimants participating. If a portion of the RESEA is provided in a group setting, the staff time for that activity should be divided by the number of RESEA participants who are likely to be a part of the group activity. For example, if two staff members conduct a group orientation session that lasts one and one half hours and ten RESEA participants are expected to attend, the staff time charged for each RESEA participant for this activity would be 18 minutes. This is calculated as follows:

$$90 \text{ minutes per member} \times 2 \text{ staff members} = 180 \text{ minutes}$$

$$180 \text{ minutes} / 10 \text{ participants} = 18 \text{ staff time minutes per RESEA}$$

Continuing States Delaying Transitioning to the New RESEA Target Population: For any portion of 2015 that states continue to select and serve UI claimants for RESEAs under the prior UI REA program rules, funding for each RESEA continues to be limited to two hours per RESEA. However, continuing states may request additional funding for the provision of targeted reemployment services under the new RESEA guidelines to meet the needs of each claimant in accordance with the claimant's reemployment plan. All staffing costs should be calculated based on the direct time charges per activity (see above example for calculating group activity costs, if any).

C. Administrative Processes. States must establish or renew an agreement or Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the selected workforce service provider organization to address the requirements of the FY 2015 RESEA program funded under this grant. The MOU must, address the following services, as well as reemployment services if the state RESEA program is funding those services:

- Orientation to help claimants access self-service core services offered at AJCs through the resource room or virtually, with particular emphasis on accessing available labor market and career information;

- Registration with the state's job bank;
- Referrals to appropriate services offered through AJCs such as self-assessments, education and training information, interviewing techniques, networking, career exploration, and online job and occupations resources; and
- Support in the development of the claimant's individual reemployment plan that must include work search activities, workshops on topics such as resume writing job search strategies if needed, and/or approved training.

New states must submit a copy of the MOU or provide the date when it will be submitted. Continuing states do not need to submit a copy of the MOU if there are no needed revisions to reflect changes consistent with the new rules for the RESEA program, but they must certify that an MOU or other agreement has been signed by all service partners for the RESEA program. The agreement or MOU must confirm that the UI and workforce service providers, including state and local service partners, have agreed to collaborate to ensure that the requirements of the RESEA program will be met. This includes providing appropriate reemployment services to RESEA participants by the designated party and providing the data that is needed for the ETA required reports.

D. UI Feedback Loop and Adjudication. Once selected for a RESEA, claimants are required to participate in all components of the RESEA. Failure to report or participate in any aspect of the RESEA must result in referral to adjudication of these issues under applicable state law. States must include a description in their proposals for the:

- Feedback loop from the AJC to the UI system as to whether the claimants reported as directed and participated in the minimum activities outlined in their reemployment plan;
- Feedback loop established to refer any UI eligibility issues identified in the eligibility review for adjudication; and
- Process for referring to adjudication UI claimants selected for RESEAs who failed to report for the RESEA without contacting the agency.

E. Performance and Reporting. Currently, a measure of program effectiveness is derived from comparing outcomes of the UI REA treatment group with outcomes from a similar group of claimants who were selected for the comparison group and did not participate in the UI REA program. The current UI REA reporting requirements will remain in effect for the duration of the FY 2015 grant and through FY 2016 for those states that are currently operating UI REA programs. States must submit timely required reports, which are the ETA 9128 and ETA 9129. These reports are due on the 20th day of the second month following the end of the reporting quarter. Schedules for the submission of each report are provided in ET Handbook No. 401. These reports capture specific data about the program participants and the comparison group. States must continue the necessary cross-program coordination that ensures data quality.

States must review their reported data for the most recent four-quarter period and confirm the accuracy of the data in a narrative attached to the FY 2015 RESEA grant proposal. The narrative should explain the steps the state is taking to correct any errors in the data

identified by the Department and the state. It should also address negative results that have occurred over multiple reporting periods in measurements of average duration, benefits per claimant, percent exhausting, and percent reemployed for participants compared to the comparison group. The narrative should address planned changes that will be implemented to improve data quality. Attachment D has been developed to help states identify reporting problems. The quarterly summary of data includes comparisons of the workload activities and of the outcomes. States should use these summaries in preparing the narratives for their proposals, and the National Office will use these summaries to evaluate the state's proposal for a FY 2015 RESEA grant.

States must agree to participate in any ETA-funded evaluations of the effectiveness of the RESEA program. Results of these studies may be used for a report(s) to Congress. States selected to participate in the current UI REA evaluation must calculate costs based upon the evaluation design that has been developed in conjunction with the evaluation contractor. In addition, states must participate in periodic RESEA conference calls and webinars to facilitate information sharing and technical assistance.

As stated previously, the Department is planning to utilize the WIOA common measures to assess RESEA program outcomes. The Department will be providing states the opportunity for notice and comment in the Federal Register as the new reporting and performance requirements are developed for the RESEA program.

9. **RESEA Methodology and Required Reports**. Accurate reporting is critical to the success of the RESEA program. State funding is based upon the number of RESEAs scheduled. As noted above, the current UI REA reporting requirements will remain in effect for the duration of the FY 2015 grant and through FY 2016 for those states that are currently operating UI REA programs. States must submit timely and accurate required reports (ETA 9128 and ETA 9129). The past UI REA program measurement has demonstrated the value of this type of program as it has quantified the differences between claimants who have been selected to participate in the program and a group of claimants who have similar characteristics but have not been selected to participate. Claimants who have similar expectations of returning to work are assigned to the treatment or comparison group at the time that the REA treatment group is selected. Random selection of the comparison group provides the most valid means of measuring differences.

These data have been used for reports to Congress on the UI REA program and for budgeting purposes, and have clearly demonstrated the importance of the program. States submit reports on a quarterly basis and are responsible for ensuring that the data reported are accurate and the reports are submitted timely. These data are entered into the UI Web-based reporting system. Reporting instructions for both reports are contained in ET Handbook No. 401, and the edit checks for these reports are contained in ET Handbook No. 402.

It is the intent of the Department to eliminate the need for states to maintain a comparison group as currently required for the UI REA program.

10. Proposal Format and Instructions. The format and instructions for preparing the RESEA grant proposals are provided in the attachments to this UIPL. Attachment A provides guidance for states that have not received a REA grant before this fiscal year. Attachment B contains the elements that must be included in an abstract that must accompany all proposals. Attachment C provides guidance to states currently operating a program. Attachment D is information related to reporting for those states currently operating a UI REA program. All pages in the state's proposal should be numbered.

Each proposal should contain both the name and telephone number of the state agency administrator who is to be notified of approval of the grant and the name, telephone number, and e-mail address of the individual who can respond to questions about the proposal.

Standard Form (SF)-424, *Application for Federal Assistance*, and SF-424A, *Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs*, must be submitted for all RESEA grants. The SF-424A requires a breakout of object class categories in item 6 of section B —Budget Categories. The breakouts must match the proposed expenditures.

11. Funding Priority. Grants will be awarded in the following priority, as feasible to fund:

- Continuing state RESEA (formerly UI REA) programs at their current level;
- New state RESEA programs at 10,000 RESEAs or less;
- Continuing state RESEA programs currently funded at 10,000 RESEAs or below to expand to a higher level in increments of 10,000 RESEAs or less;
- New state RESEA programs at a level greater than 10,000 RESEAs in increments of 10,000 or less; and
- Continuing state RESEA programs currently funded in excess of 10,000 RESEAs to expand to a higher level in increments of 10,000 RESEAs or less.

12. Grant Scoring Criteria for New RESEA Programs. The RESEA proposal scoring criteria are explained in Attachment A and apply to states that have not previously operated a RESEA (formerly, UI REA) program. The highest scoring proposal will be funded first based on available funding, followed in sequence by those with lower scores until all available funds are exhausted. Proposals scoring fewer than 80 points will not be funded.

13. Grant Awards to States to Continue RESEA Programs. States currently operating a RESEA (formerly, UI REA) program should submit an abstract containing the information in Attachment B and provide the information requested in Attachment C. These proposals will not be scored but will be evaluated and funded after review and consultation with the state(s), as needed.

14. RESEA Proposal Procedures. We encourage states to work with ETA regional office staff in developing their proposals to ensure that:

- The RESEA program is designed to meet the needs of UI claimants;
- UI and AJC staff work cooperatively in planning, developing, testing, and implementing this program;

- The proposed expenditures are justified and appropriate; and
- The state has, is prepared to, or will be preparing to develop systems for collecting data for the required reports once these new reports have been defined.

15. Timelines.

- States must submit proposals to the National Office by May 1, 2015.
- Award notifications are expected to be issued by June 12, 2015.
- States must submit an SF-424, *Application for Federal Assistance*, signed by the state agency administrator and an SF-424A, *Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs*, with the proposal. If any changes are required after review of the proposal, revised forms or proposals will be required before award of the grant funds.

16. Action Requested. State agency administrators are requested to:

- Provide information contained in this UIPL to appropriate staff.
- Send, via e-mail, an electronic copy of the proposal and a summary of the RESEA Grant proposal to ows.sbr@dol.gov.

17. Inquiries. Please direct questions to the appropriate Regional Office.

18. Attachments.

Attachment A- Unemployment Insurance (UI) Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) Proposal Outline for First Year RESEA Grants

Attachment B - Elements of an Unemployment Insurance (UI) Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) Grant Proposal Abstract

Attachment C - Unemployment Insurance (UI) Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) Proposal Outline for States Continuing a RESEA Program

Attachment D - The Unemployment Insurance Reemployment and Eligibility Assessment (UI REA) Data Concerns for States with Current UI REA Grants