TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT NOTICE	NO. 23-12
	DATE February 28, 2013

TO: STATE WORKFORCE AGENCIES

FROM: JANE OATES
Assistant Secretary

SUBJECT: UI Excellence in Action: States Helping States Move Forward

1. **Purpose.** To provide an update on the UI Excellence in Action initiative and announce the availability of exciting new tools designed to help states improve business processes in their unemployment insurance (UI) programs.

2. **References.** Training and Employment Notice (TEN) No. 18-11, *Unemployment Insurance (UI) Community of Practice (CoP).*

3. **Background.** The recent global recession, and its ongoing impact on our national economy has posed enormous challenges to our nation's UI system. States have experienced an unprecedented demand for UI services, which has strained information technology systems and staff capacity, and led to the decimation of many state unemployment funds. UI systems are facing their greatest challenge – to further enhance capacity and productivity in order to improve customer satisfaction and strength, and to demonstrate the ongoing viability of the nation's UI program.

   The *UI Excellence in Action: States Helping States Move Forward* initiative, a collaborative effort between the U.S. Department of Labor's (Department) Employment and Training Administration (ETA) and the National Association of State Workforce Agencies' (NASWA) Information Technology Support Center (ITSC), was established to use existing knowledge and experience in states to raise performance across all states by:

   - Identifying successful business processes/practices in support of the four core functional areas of UI claims processing: initial claims, adjudication, continued claims, and appeals;
   - Documenting these processes/practices;
   - Sharing these processes/practices with states; and
   - Helping states to replicate these processes/practices for improved performance.

   States were encouraged to identify and nominate successful business processes/practices either in their own state, or in other states. A total of 14 states submitted nominations during two nomination periods. Based on submitted nominations and subsequent telephone interviews, site visits and case studies, over 130 potential practices were identified for

review. These were narrowed down to 39 successful processes/practices which range from simple business strategies to complex information technology initiatives.

4. **Update on the Initiative and the UI CoP.** These exemplary processes and practices, along with detailed case studies, are now available to all states via the UI CoP website. The UI CoP is a dynamic resource available to and empowered by staff within the UI community. It features key priorities such as program integrity, improved program performance, and reemployment. Existing users can log in using the following link – http://ui.workforce3one.org/member/login. Users without a UI CoP account may use the same link and click on *Sign Up Here* at http://ui.workforce3one.org/.

   Information about the successful practices is searchable by 12 functional and 23 sub-functional areas, by state, and by keyword. In addition, the UI CoP also contains an Assessment Tool designed to help states identify potential applicable practices by scoring the 39 successful practices relative to the agency's current status and implementation attributes such as feasibility, effectiveness, level of complexity, risk, and technology required. The assessment process can be a valuable first step to building a roadmap for the state's UI improvement program. The Assessment Tool is accessible by clicking on the *Successful Practices Tool* text. Instructions for using the tool can be found by clicking on the *Using the Successful Practice Tool* text.

   The *UI Excellence in Action: States Helping States Move Forward* initiative has greatly enhanced the content on the UI CoP, which the UI community is encouraged to explore. The success of the UI CoP depends on the participation and contributions of its members.

5. **Upcoming Events.** In the coming weeks, the Department will be presenting webinars to acquaint states with the UI CoP as well as the Assessment Tool. Future webinars will highlight successful processes/practices in each of the four core areas. States are encouraged to participate in the webinars as well as exploring the UI CoP on their own. By learning from each other and sharing best practices, states can help each other to improve productivity, accelerate and manage change, recognize and replicate innovation, and strengthen their UI programs for the 21st Century.

6. **Action Requested.** State Administrators and UI Directors are asked to support and promote participation in this initiative by encouraging their UI staff to explore the UI CoP, study the best practices shared there, and use the Assessment Tool to identify potential applicable practices that could be replicated in their state.

7. **Inquiries.** Inquiries should be directed to the appropriate Regional Office.

8. **Attachment.** Letter to State Workforce Agency Administrators and UI Directors.

Attachment

UI EXCELLENCE IN ACTION
STATES HELPING STATES MOVE FORWARD

February 27, 2013

Dear State Workforce Agency Administrators and UI Directors:

Over the last two years, we have provided information and sought your input for an exciting project, *UI Excellence in Action*, a peer-to-peer initiative to help states improve their performance and accountability in Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefit claims processing. As this project nears completion, we are pleased to provide you with an update on our work (attached) and announce the availability of products designed to help all states improve their UI business processes in Initial Claims, Adjudication, Continued Claims, and Appeals.

A data-driven nomination and review process supported by the UI Performance and Accountability Improvement Workgroup representing state administrators, UI directors and staff, NASWA/ITSC staff, and ETA UI national and regional staff identified a wide range of successful practices that states can put to immediate use. They range from simple business strategies to complex information technology initiatives. Summaries of these exemplary successful practices and detailed case studies are now available to all states via the UI Community of Practice (CoP) website. Existing users can log in using the following link – http://ui.workforce3one.org/member/login. If you do not have a UI CoP account, new users should use the same link and click on *Sign Up Here*.

You can search for information on the successful practices by 12 functional and 23 sub-functional areas, by state, and by keyword. In addition, the UI Successful Practices home page contains an Assessment Tool that can be accessed by clicking on the *Successful Practices Tool* text. This tool is designed to help a state match potential applicable practices based on feasibility, effectiveness, level of complexity, risk, and technology required. The assessment process can be a valuable first step to building a roadmap for the state's UI improvement program. Important instructions for using the tool can be found by clicking on the *Using the Successful Practice Tool* text.

This rich new material greatly enhances the content on the UI CoP, which we invite you to explore. Achieving our goal of making the UI CoP the "go to" site for the UI community to communicate, collaborate, and share knowledge depends upon your active participation. In the coming weeks we will be presenting webinars to introduce states to the site as well as the Assessment Tool. We encourage states to participate in the webinars as well as explore the site

on their own. Future webinars will highlight successful practices in each of the core areas. It is our belief that exposure and adoption of these successful practices will lead to improved performance by states individually as well as throughout the UI system as a whole.

A great deal of work has gone into producing this material. We want to thank all the states who have shared their time and expertise. Truly, states are already helping states. We hope that you will find the information helpful to you as you seek new ways to improve the performance and outcomes of your state UI program.

Regards,

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Assistant Commissioner
Unemployment Insurance
Washington State

Gay M. Gilbert
Project Co-Sponsor
Administrator
Office of Unemployment Insurance
Employment and Training Administration
U.S. Department of Labor