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| <b>TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT<br/>NOTICE</b> | <b>NO.</b> 23-12                 |
|   | <b>DATE</b><br>February 28, 2013 |

**TO:** STATE WORKFORCE AGENCIES

**FROM:** JANE OATES /s/  
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 21<sup>st</sup> 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.