

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

The Workforce Investment Act (WIA) requires that employment and training programs be provided through consolidated One-Stop centers so that both individuals and employers can more easily access needed services regardless of the funding source. WIA requires that the Unemployment Insurance (UI) programs be partners to these One-Stop systems to enable both claimants and employers to learn about and access One-Stop services through their interactions with the UI program, and conversely, to enable One-Stop customers to learn about and access UI services.

DOL funded Social Policy Research Associates (SPR) to evaluate the existing linkages between UI and One-Stop systems in a sample of states and local areas that had relatively well-established One-Stop systems. The specific goals of this study were the following:

- Describe the current connections between UI and One-Stop systems. Aspects of such connections include:
 - Organizational connections between UI and One-Stop systems at both the state and local levels.
 - Connections to enhance claimant services.
 - Connections to enhance employer services.
- Assess these connections from the perspectives of:
 - UI and One-Stop staff.
 - Claimants.
 - Employers.
- Determine the factors that facilitated and inhibited connections between UI and One-Stop systems.
- Recommend policies and practices to improve connections.

To assess the current connections between UI and One-Stop systems, we conducted case studies of eight states and eight local areas. From among the states that implemented One-Stop systems early, we selected the sample of eight states that varied by the method of taking initial claims (in person or by telephone) and the level of

connectivity between UI and One-Stop systems. The local areas were chosen from nominations by state UI and One-Stop directors.

We conducted telephone interviews with state UI and One-Stop directors to obtain their perspectives of both systems. We then conducted in-depth, 3-day site visits to each local area. We interviewed administrative and line staff of both the UI and One-Stop systems, observed some reemployment services, and conducted focus groups with staff, claimants and employers.

This study does not seek to determine the relative benefits of in-person and telephone claims methods. Rather, it assesses the types of connections that do exist, their effectiveness in making a connection, the reasons why states have made their choices, and finally identifies areas where connections may be improved. Since telephone initial claim systems and their interface with reemployment services are quite new and likely to grow in importance, the study's recommendations tend to emphasize elements of potential improvement for telephone systems.

STATE ORGANIZATIONAL CONNECTIONS BETWEEN UI AND ONE-STOP SYSTEMS

UI Role in One-Stop Design and Operations at the State Level

Within our study states, the major factor that influenced UI's role in the One-Stop design was whether the state took initial claims by telephone or in-person. The three states that continued to take initial claims in-person at One-Stop centers were actively involved in One-Stop planning and design. In contrast, the four states that decided to switch to telephone claims at the same time as One-Stop implementation did not play a significant role in One-Stop design. In one state, UI's role diminished when it shifted to telephone claims after implementing its One-Stop system.

Among the states in our sample, UI played differing roles in financing the One-Stop systems. In several states, UI contributed to the costs of developing technological tools needed for their One-Stop systems. In the in-person claims states, typically UI was a major contributor to the overhead and personnel costs of the One-Stop facilities, by stationing UI staff at those facilities.

A number of UI respondents in this study reported that developing management information systems (MIS) that allowed One-Stop partners to share information from disparate systems was a major technical challenge. In addition, UI respondents made it clear that whenever they sought to share information with partners, their first priority

was to maintain data confidentiality. Some UI respondents thought that confidentiality was a greater obstacle to coordinating MIS systems than the technical difficulties. If, however, states could meet confidentiality requirements, they used two methods to share information among One-Stop partners. First, one state created a common intake system that could take an initial UI claim, determine eligibility for other programs, enroll individuals into services, and maintain management information. Second and more commonly, states modified separate computer systems to link with other systems for specific purposes.

UI systems have extensive performance measurement systems, which remained intact; all states reported that the One-Stop implementation did not affect either their ability to track performance or their level of performance on UI performance measures. Only one state had adopted a statewide set of One-Stop performance measures, which included several measures of UI performance.

UI Choice of Methods to Take Initial Claims

Since the decision about shifting to telephone claims substantially influenced the connections between UI and One-Stop systems in these eight states, this study examined why states chose their methods of claims taking and how the telephone claims taking was implemented. Both internal UI and connectivity issues affected all states, but there were marked differences in the reasons that states offered about why they changed or remained with the same initial-claims method.

The five study states that took initial claims by telephone reported a variety of reasons for making the shift, virtually all of which were internal to the UI system.

- **Greater Cost Efficiency.** All five states reported that taking the initial claim by telephone increased the cost efficiency of the initial claims process.
- **Increased Accuracy of Claims.** Several states noted that they could apply their UI laws more consistently, thus ensuring a more accurate claim, by taking claims in a centralized call center.
- **Increased Claimant Satisfaction.** Among the telephone claims states that surveyed customers, all found that customers overwhelmingly favored telephone claims. Customers cited convenience, ease of use, and privacy as benefits of telephone initial claims
- **Available Federal Funds.** Two states noted that the availability of the federal grants for telephone initial claims systems increased their incentive to move to telephone initial claims, although DOL's guidance

indicated that these grants were not an endorsement of any particular method of taking initial claims.

UI staff in the three states that chose to retain in-person claims consistently cited concerns that shifting to telephone claims would reduce the connections between UI, ES and other reemployment services. Although they agreed that telephone claims might reduce costs, they felt that maintaining strong connections to reemployment services was important and would reduce UI benefits in the long run. They relied on the contact through the in-person initial claim and had not yet figured out how to maintain the connection in a telephone system. Factors that influenced these states included:

- **Historically Strong Relationship between ES and UI.** All the states that retained in-person initial claims characterized the relationship between ES and UI as strong in their state. Of the telephone states, only one state made a similar characterization.
- **Emphasis on Work-Search Testing.** All the in-person claims states placed a strong emphasis on work-search testing.
- **View of UI as Gateway to Reemployment Services.** All the in-person claims states explicitly stated that filing UI claims was the way that unemployed workers connected to reemployment services.
- **Concern about Difficulty of Filing Telephone Claims.** Two telephone states provided in-person claims options for claimants because they felt that some claimants lacked telephones or found using the telephone system difficult.

Four of the five states that have adopted telephone initial claims centralized claims taking into regional call centers. Each center handled a high volume of telephone calls, predominantly initial claims and customer service inquiries.

Generally, staff in call centers were less experienced than were the staff in previous SESA local offices because a number of experienced UI staff members did not take call center jobs. Also in some states, call centers had higher staff turnover. As a result, call center staff were less familiar with the reemployment services in the One-Stop system than previous SESA staff.

Staff reported some advantages of working in the call centers, such as feeling safer and having greater flexibility in their personal schedules. However, staff in our focus groups identified many disadvantages of working in the call center. Staff were most concerned about the pressure that they felt to complete initial claims quickly. Staff also felt that they had lost privacy and professional independence. Some likened

their working conditions to those of mass-production factories where there was constant measurement and control.

Staff at the call centers had limited contact with staff at One-Stop centers. Generally, call center staff knew little about One-Stop centers or the services provided. Call center staff had very few opportunities to meet their colleagues from the One-Stop centers. Both call center and One-Stop center staff reported that it was difficult to obtain information from one another.

LOCAL ORGANIZATIONAL CONNECTIONS BETWEEN UI AND ONE-STOP SYSTEMS

UI Role in Local One-Stop Design

UI's role in managing One-Stop centers was strongly influenced by the extent of UI presence in the center. In the four sites where UI was fully present, UI was a part of the SESA management team and was strongly involved in One-Stop operations. In sites where no claims-taking staff were located at the One-Stop center, UI had no role in the management of the One-Stop center.

UI and One-Stop Staffing Arrangements

To serve claimant customers, in-person sites varied widely regarding the extent that UI claims-taking staff and functions were integrated with other partners' staff and functions. We found four types of relationships (not mutually exclusive and some sites had no examples):

- **Integrated Staffing Where Jobs Are Integrated.** In two sites, UI and ES staff were at least partially integrated.
- **UI Staff Performing Some Common One-Stop Tasks.** In one site, UI staff performed intake functions for the One-Stop center, such as working the reception desk.
- **UI Staff Conducting Some Services for WPRS.** In two One-Stop centers, UI staff conducted WPRS workshops for UI claimants and tracked WPRS claimants' progress in their required services.
- **Co-Locating Staff with Separate Duties.** In two sites, UI staff were located at the One-Stop center but did not perform common tasks or help out with other programs.

In telephone claims-taking sites where no UI staff were present at One-Stop centers, UI did not perform any One-Stop functions.

To serve employer customers, six One-Stop centers formed integrated employer services teams composed of staff from several One-Stop partners although UI staff were not included in any of these teams. UI auditors were located in One-Stop centers at all four in-person claims sites and one telephone claims site, but auditors did not report to the One-Stop management in any of these sites.

Operating in a One-Stop environment required training for many UI and other One-Stop employees. We found four types of training relating directly or indirectly to the connectivity between UI and One-Stop services:

- **Cross-Program Training** to allow employees of one program to carry out duties in another program. Although only one site fully cross-trained staff, others cross-trained ES and UI staff to increase staffing flexibility.
- **Information-Sharing** to facilitate effective referrals. Some sites provided specific information-sharing training, but staff also reported a good deal of informal information-sharing.
- **In-program Training for UI Call Center Staff.** When UI staff shifted to call centers, all staff received specialized training in use of the telecommunications technology, new claims-taking procedures, and customer-service skills. UI staff did not receive any training on connecting claimants to reemployment services, except in one state.
- **One-Stop Teambuilding Training.** Several One-Stop centers provided training to all One-Stop staff to improve their capacity to work effectively with partners and work in teams. In the in-person sites, UI staff participated in this training.

Physical Facilities

None of the sites made location decisions strictly based on considerations about the UI program. Nonetheless, several architectural features were especially important to the One-Stop centers taking initial claims in person. The lobby and intake areas for in-person initial claims centers generally were larger to provide space for claimants to wait and for UI staff to serve them. All sites eliminated the counter that formerly separated claimants from staff. Further, some sites located their self-access services and job matching systems so that they would be visible and accessible to UI claimants. Some sites that shifted to telephone claims taking had to reconfigure their One-Stop centers to fill space made available when UI staff moved to the call center. All sites, regardless of the method of taking the initial claim, had eliminated the barrier counter that formally separated claimants from staff.

UI AND ONE-STOP CONNECTIONS FOR CLAIMANT SERVICES

Connections at Initial Claim

The initial claim has long been an important entry point to the workforce development system for unemployed workers. For some, an early connection to good reemployment services can shorten the duration of unemployment. For others whose skills may require upgrading, a connection early in the worker's spell of unemployment provides financial resources that makes it easier for a worker to attend training.

Direct Connections

Direct connections occur because a UI process is explicitly structured to connect claimants to reemployment services. These connections are systematically initiated by staff, and are part of a well-defined process. Many of the UI and reemployment services staff at the One-Stop centers indicated that direct, personal connections were generally quite effective in linking claimants to reemployment services.

All three sites where claimants filed initial claims in-person designed their One-Stop intake processes to directly link claimants to several reemployment services at the time that claimants filed their claims. The two telephone-claims sites that allowed in-person claims also provided some direct linkages for in-person filers. Sites used three different strategies to directly link claimants to reemployment services:

- **Integrated Intake.** Only one study site had a fully integrated intake system. At this site, customers directly keyed in the computer identifying information, which was used by all One-Stop programs, including UI, ES, and EDWAA.
- **Coordinated Intake.** Although their systems were not fully integrated, two study sites coordinated UI claims taking with Title III eligibility determination and intake into reemployment services.
- **Staff-Assisted Linkages.** In three One-Stop centers, the UI staff informally assessed claimants' needs and directly referred them to other services. In other sites, UI staff provided orientations or tours of the One-Stop center's services.

Another way to directly link claimants to services is to require claimants to register with ES. Four study states—three in-person and one telephone claims state—required ES registration for all non-job-attached claimants and one local site required all claimants who filed claims in person to register with ES.

Information Connections

Information connections occur when all claimants are systematically informed about reemployment services and ways to access them. These connections, however, rely on the claimant to act upon the information they received. We found two types of information connections in our study sites: (1) sending specialized brochures to claimants describing One-Stop reemployment services, and (2) including information about One-Stop reemployment services in UI claimant handbooks. In addition, in-person claims-takers routinely informed claimants about reemployment services as part of the direct connections described above. However, none of the telephone claims-takers in the three sites without direct connections routinely provided information about services to claimants.

Ad Hoc Connections

Ad hoc connections occur when UI staff provide claimants with information only when claimants ask about services or express anxiety about their job loss. Thus, these connections are informal and rely on claimants' initiative. Staff at all the call centers responded to specific claimants' requests for information about reemployment services. Typically, staff provided the address and telephone number of the nearest One-Stop center or the state's toll-free telephone number, through which claimants could obtain the same information.

Factors That Affected Connections at Initial Claim

- **Method Of Taking Initial Claims.** Within the sites in our study, the method of taking initial claims strongly affected the type and extent of connections to reemployment services. All sites that took claims in person directly linked claimants to reemployment services. Only one site telephone claims state did so, and that was through ES mandatory registration. The remaining telephone sites relied on informational and ad hoc connections.
- **Time Constraints.** Staff in all call centers indicated that they were under significant time pressure to meet their minutes-per-unit goal and state customer service standards, which limited the time to connect claimants to services.
- **Need to Improve Programs Separately.** Two telephone states felt that they needed to improve the UI system and develop better One-Stop services before they concentrated on improving the connections between those two systems.

- **Historically Close Relationship between ES and UI.** Direct connections were provided in states that had an historically close relationship between ES and UI.
- **Success of Previous Connections.** Several sites sought to maintain the direct connections to JTPA as well as ES that they thought were successful before One-Stop implementation.
- **Emphasis on the Claimant Making the Connection.** Providing claimants with information but not directly connecting them to services was consistent with two states' broader policy of relying on self-help services.

Connections at Eligibility Review

DOL designed the Eligibility Review Program (ERP) to serve two functions: to enforce the work-search test which verifies that claimants were able, available, and actively seeking work; and to connect claimants to reemployment services during their claim. Three study states in our sample used the ERP. Their program designs were quite consistent with this dual emphasis.

For example, in the most intensive ERP studied, staff reviewed the claims status for all non-job-attached claimants over the course of their claim. Staff conducted an individual review with each claimant every 4 to 5 weeks, depending on staff resources. Reviews alternated between full interviews—where ES staff met in person with each claimant and went over the individual's job-search strategy—and paper reviews of each claimant's job search logs.

Connections at Continuing Claims

To continue to receive benefits, claimants must certify throughout their claim that they are still unemployed and are able and available for work. Six study states used Integrated Voice Response (IVR) systems to accept by telephone the certification by claimants that they are able and available for work. Of these, three used their IVR systems to give claimants information about either reemployment services (an information connection) or job openings (a direct service connection). These states allowed claimants, through a menu option, to access information about job openings in their occupations.

Connections from Adjudication Process

Adjudicators in four of the eight states provided information about reemployment services when the claimant asked about such services (ad hoc connections). When asked by claimants, most adjudicators simply provided a telephone number and address

of a nearby One-Stop center. When adjudication occurred at a One-Stop center, however, the adjudicator would refer the claimant to the intake desk or to a specific service, if appropriate. The constraints on responding to claimants' request for information about services from adjudication included lack of time and lack of knowledge about reemployment services.

WPRS Connections to One-Stop Services

Another important way that claimants are linked to One-Stop reemployment services is through Worker Profiling and Reemployment Services Systems (WPRS), which identify claimants who are at risk of exhausting their UI benefits and refer those claimants to reemployment services early in their unemployment spell.

Identification and Selection of WPRS Claimants

All states gave local areas some flexibility in determining the number of claimants referred to their offices, so that they could match the number of WPRS claimants to the local capacity to serve them. Two states established minimum "cutoff levels" so that only those most at-risk were required to participate, but another state encouraged local areas to refer virtually all claimants because the number of claimants coming into One-Stop centers fell when the state shifted to telephone claims taking.

In almost all the sites where the state central office notified claimants, local staff and some claimants indicated that the information provided by the states was too threatening and, in some cases, insulting and patronizing. In two of the three sites where the local office notified claimants, however, local staff stressed the benefits of participation.

WPRS Services

Three of the eight sites provided WPRS services that were very consistent with DOL guidance. Although these sites differed in their approach, each provided WPRS claimants with information about One-Stop services, developed meaningful and customized service plans, directly linked claimants to additional services, and followed up with claimants to check on their progress and assess their need for additional services.

Three other sites provided brief WPRS workshops that included some reemployment services but either did not develop an individual service plan or developed a rather pro forma plan after only a brief interview with the claimant.

The remaining two sites only gave WPRS claimants information about One-Stop services through a very brief orientation lasting 30 to 35 minutes. Although WPRS claimants could then choose to participate in several types of services, they were not required to participate in any services.

Enforcement of Participation Requirements

Local areas varied widely in the extent that they enforced the participation requirements. Two sites enforced both the requirement that claimants report to initial services and the requirement that they make satisfactory progress in planned services. Three other sites enforced the requirement to participate in initial services but not the requirement to participate in planned services. However, two other sites did not generally enforce even the requirement that WPRS claimants report to the orientation or initial workshop.

Opinions about WPRS Services

Both claimants and staff expressed generally favorable opinions about the WPRS system and services, and made recommendations for improvements. Claimants generally found the WPRS services helpful although some said that they at first resented the fact that they were required to come in for services. Claimants made three recommendations for improving WPRS: (1) inform claimants sooner, (2) make the notification letter less threatening and focus it more on the valuable services, and (3) increase the number of people referred to services.

Staff also generally approved of the WPRS approach. Most staff felt that early intervention benefited claimants, and that, as one staff stated, WPRS “brings in likely exhaustees early.” Most also approved of the fact that claimants were required to participate. Staff also felt that it would be better to refer claimants to services sooner.

Factors that Affected WPRS Implementation and Services

Both state and local leadership affected implementation of WPRS. In two sites with well-developed services, the state designed the service approach and the enforcement procedures. In contrast, in two local sites that placed few requirements on WPRS participants, the state placed little emphasis on work search testing in general and on the enforcement procedures for WPRS. Local leadership was also reflected in the ways that sites implemented WPRS. For the most part, sites that tried to link UI claimants to reemployment services in other ways, such as through initial claims, also made more effort to link claimants through the WPRS system.

Connections from Reemployment Services to UI

Connections to Improve Knowledge of Where to File UI Claims

Most in-person claims states reported that unemployed workers generally did not have problems learning where to file claims even after the shift from local offices to One-Stop centers. Staff respondents in most telephone sites, however, indicated initially some individuals were confused about where to file a claim. When claimants mistakenly came into a One-Stop, however, they were able to use telephones at the center to file their claims.

In addition, some states and local One-Stop centers took steps to increase knowledge about where and how to file a initial claims including: (1) launching marketing campaigns; (2) working with community-based organizations; (3) involving employers in giving laid off workers information about how and where to file; and (4) providing some information through the Internet about how and where to file UI claims.

Connections to Help Claimants Get Information about UI

In most in-person claims states, all UI services were located at the One-Stop center so UI staff could generally respond to all inquiries about UI. In telephone claims states, however, claimants' ability to obtain information about UI through One-Stop centers varied. Obtaining information about the status of a claim was relatively easy because ES staff usually could access the UI data system to obtain such information. Finding out about adjudication or answers to more complex questions was more difficult. In two telephone claims states, current or former UI staff were located at One-Stop centers and could address more complex inquiries. One-Stop staff at other sites needed to telephone the adjudicator handling the case, a task which One-Stop staff found difficult.

Assessment of Connections between UI and Types of Reemployment Services for Claimants

Connections to Core Services

Core services were by far the most common services that UI claimants received. When claimants were referred to One-Stop reemployment services from UI—whether through direct, informational or ad hoc connections—they were generally linked to core services. In all sites, core services included:

- Self-access services that job seekers could use to assess their own skills and interests, understand the labor market, and search for jobs.
- Job search workshops covering subjects such as preparing resumes, writing cover letters, interviewing, networking, and searching for jobs on the Internet
- Automated job-matching system, all of which were connected to America's Job Bank and some to America's Talent Bank.
- Internet access to some services such as job matching, LMI or career exploration.
- Staff identified three advantages of these core services: (1) they could serve more customers with self-access services; (2) self-access services were immediately available so they could begin their job search without delay; and (3) self-help services were consistent with some states' shift away from mandatory job search requirements.

Nonetheless, we found widespread concern among staff that less-educated, lower-skilled claimants were less able to take advantage of these services than their better-educated, more-skilled counterparts. In particular, staff and some claimants reported that the automated self-access services were difficult to use for those with little experience using personal computers.

Connections to Staff-Assisted Services and Training

Two sites connected claimants, particularly low-skilled workers, to more intensive staff-assisted services. In these two sites ES staff worked one-on-one with claimants and provided job referrals in the traditional way.

Further, all sites referred claimants interested in training to EDWAA, and some sites linked claimants more directly to these services, for example, by determining eligibility for EDWAA when claimants filed their initial claim. Four sites had recent experience with TAA and NAFTA-TAA programs, although the way that UI claimants were connected to these programs varied from layoff to layoff, depending on the timing of the certification of eligibility.

Opinions about Effective Services

Claimants generally felt that the most effective services were those that provided them with a sense of support as well as specific job search skills. Staff also tended to nominate services that made efficient use of their time. Overall, both staff and claimants frequently identified three services as most effective, in the following order:

- (1) job search workshops (including the WPRS orientations with job search content),
- (2) self-access services in resource rooms, and
- (3) staff-assisted job referrals.

Claimants' Responses to Connections between UI and One-Stop

Claimants generally gave high marks to the initial claims process. Although claimants were generally satisfied with both in-person and telephone methods, most respondents preferred filing by telephone because it was more convenient and private. Several claimants in our focus groups, however, strongly preferred filing claims in person, and several claimants would have liked a choice of how to file their claims.

Customers were less satisfied with the extent that they were connected to reemployment services from UI. Regardless of the type of connections provided by the UI staff, claimants in many sites said that that they needed more information about services, and they needed it earlier in their spells of unemployment.

Many claimants were very satisfied with the new One-Stop approach. Claimants frequently reported that One-Stop systems had more services than previous ES offices and that the centers were better organized. Claimants also commented that they found the One-Stop services more helpful than those they had used previously.

Claimants' Recommendations for Improving Connections to Reemployment Services

Several claimants recommended informing claimants about reemployment services earlier in their unemployment spell. Specific recommendations included:

- Calling claimants in for WPRS orientations sooner.
- Having employers distribute information about reemployment services and UI at the time of layoff.
- Providing more accurate information about reemployment services and UI during rapid response to plant closings.
- Advertising the One-Stop services in the media.
- Informing claimants about all the services available at the time claimants first come into the One-Stop center.

Claimants also recommended improving some One-Stop services, including providing more staff-assisted job referrals, providing more staff assistance in the resource rooms, and making it easier for claimants to find out about their claims at the One-Stop center.

UI AND ONE-STOP CONNECTIONS FOR EMPLOYER SERVICES

Connections between UI and One-Stop Employer Services

At five sites, UI auditors were located at the One-Stop center, although they were not formally a part of the One-Stop system. In these sites, UI tax field staff made efforts to connect employers to One-Stop services, although their practices varied. In these sites, the proximity of the UI offices to One-Stop employer service team members both raised UI staff's awareness of the One-Stop services and made it easier to refer employers to One-Stop staff. In the three sites where the auditors were not located in One-Stop centers, however, the auditors did not attempt to connect employers to One-Stop services, even informally.

Another way some states market One-Stop employer services is through the UI adjudicators. In three sites where adjudicators were located at One-Stop centers, UI adjudicators were particularly successful in connecting employers to One-Stop services. On the other hand, in the states where adjudicators were located in call centers, adjudicators were less likely to assist employers who wanted information, for example about placing job orders through the One-Stop or ES offices.

Connections with One-Stop employer services can also benefit UI by providing employers with UI information. Sites used three methods to make these connections. First, in many cases, One-Stop employer services teams or ES account representatives provided employers with UI information, such as tax-related information. Second, several sites regularly held workshops and seminars for employers that included information on UI issues; in some cases, One-Stop centers held seminars devoted entirely to UI issues. Third, EDWAA rapid response and Trade Adjustment Assistance teams from One-Stop centers that met with employers often included UI staff and provided UI information.

Factors that Affected Connections between UI and One-Stop Employer Services

- **Time Constraints.** Respondents at all levels, from the state UI division to local staff, indicated that UI staff—including field tax auditors and staff at the local site—did not have the time to discuss ES and other reemployment services with employers.
- **UI State-Level Attitudes.** Some of the state UI divisions discouraged UI field audit and adjudication staff from providing specific information about One-Stop and ES services. They felt that UI and ES were dealing with separate issues and that the two should not be mixed.

- **Attitude of One-Stop Management.** A few One-Stop sites indicated that they preferred to “control” their marketing efforts to employers, including the information that is provided and how it is provided. They did not want UI staff, therefore, to market One-Stop services.
- **Specialized Employer Staff and Contractors.** Often large employers have either separated their accounting and human resource offices or hired outside firms to handle tax issues or UI adjudications. In these situations, UI field tax auditors or adjudicators were not in contact with the employer staff who would use One-Stop services so cross-marketing was not possible.
- **Location of UI Staff.** Sites where UI staff were located at the One-Stop center tended to have better employer-service connections.

Employers’ Opinions and Recommendations

Employers’ Assessment of Current Services

By and large, employers had positive impressions of the UI audit and adjudication staff. Most employers reported that UI audit staff were fair and that their judgments, as well as those of the adjudicators, executed the law fairly.

All the employers in our sample who visited the One-Stop were pleased and impressed with the “look and feel” of the building, and felt that staff were helpful, professional, and as one employer put it, “non-bureaucratic in their approach.” Most of our employer respondents who had recently undergone a tax audit were unfamiliar with the new One-Stop system and would have welcomed more information. Other respondents who were members of local Job Service Employer Committees (JSECs) were more knowledgeable about the One-Stop approach and were more likely to have favorable comments about One-Stop services.

Employers’ Recommendations for Improving Employer Services and Connections

- **Provide More Assistance in Recruiting and Screening Skilled Job Seekers.** Many employers stated that the most valuable service that the One-Stop system could provide was access to qualified job seekers, particularly during this time of low unemployment.
- **Provide “Account Representatives.”** Even as the sites were moving to more self-directed services for employers, most employer respondents indicated that they preferred to work individually with a staff person who understood their personnel requirements, who reviewed candidates’ skills and attributes for them, and who maintained a list of referrals.

- **Provide More UI Tax Information.** Employers often wanted more information about UI tax-related issues, which they recommended providing in seminars or workshops.
- **Provide More Information about One-Stop Systems.** Many employers—especially those who had no previous contact with the One-Stop system—recommended providing employers with more information about One-Stop.

Employers' Recommendations for Improving Claimant Services

Several employers recommended improvements in individual claimant services that would also benefit employers.

- **Provide Services Attractive to High-Quality Job Applicants.** Employers strongly recommended that One-Stop systems develop services that attract more high-quality job applicants. About two-thirds of the employer respondents indicated that they still did not receive applicants that have the right skills.
- **Provide More Support to Low-Income Job Seekers.** If the One-Stop system wants employers to hire lower-skilled individuals, such as those in the TANF work-first programs, employers recommended that One-Stop provide those workers with more supportive services, such as child care and transportation assistance.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The results of this evaluation lead us to make the following recommendations to improve the connections between UI and One-Stop systems.

1. States taking initial claims by telephone should design alternative ways to connect claimants to reemployment services.
2. In-person claims states should take full advantage of the opportunity to connect claimants to services while claimants are at the center.
3. All states should provide claimants with written information about reemployment services.
4. States and local areas should systematically provide information about reemployment services at adjudication.
5. All states should consider operating an Eligibility Review Program (ERP).

6. States should provide information and access to reemployment services as part of their continuing claims process.
7. States should consider referring more claimants to WPRS services.
8. States and local areas should require more extensive, customized services for WPRS claimants.
9. States should more strenuously enforce the requirement to participate in WPRS services.
10. One-Stop systems need to ensure that UI claimants have access to appropriate services.
11. States and local areas should ensure that claimants have adequate information about how and where to file UI claims.
12. Telephone claims states should ensure that One-Stop staff have the capability to provide claimant customers with UI information.
13. One-Stop systems should use UI staff and materials to market One-Stop services to employers.
14. One-Stop staff marketing to employers should include information about UI.
15. To facilitate linkages, states and local areas should ensure that both One-Stop and UI staff are knowledgeable about each other's programs.
16. Telephone claims states should take steps to improve the working environment in call centers so that claims takers have time to connect claimants to services.