



STATE OF VERMONT
JOINT FISCAL OFFICE

MEMORANDUM

To: James Reardon, Commissioner of Finance & Management
From: Nathan Lavery, Fiscal Analyst
Date: August 17, 2010
Subject: JFO #2450, #2451, #2452

No Joint Fiscal Committee member has requested that the following items be held for review:

JFO #2450 — Request from the Department of Labor to establish two limited service positions. These positions will increase the ability of the Department of Labor to conduct timely in-person eligibility reviews. These reviews help determine eligibility and bring claimants into the Career Resource Centers more regularly.
[JFO received 7/12/10]

JFO #2451 — Request from the Department of Labor to establish five limited service positions. These positions will increase the ability of the Department of Labor to re-employ claimants and reduce erroneous payments.
[JFO received 7/12/10]

JFO #2452 — Request from the Department of Health to establish one limited service position. This position will replace a temporary, half-time, position in the WIC Breastfeeding program. The program's expansion has resulted in an increased workload, making a part-time position insufficient to complete the associated duties.
[JFO received 7/16/10]

The Governor's approval may now be considered final. We ask that you inform the Secretary of Administration and your staff of this action.

cc: Valerie Rickert, Commissioner (acting)
Wendy Davis, Commissioner



STATE OF VERMONT
JOINT FISCAL OFFICE

MEMORANDUM

To: Joint Fiscal Committee Members
From: Nathan Lavery, Fiscal Analyst
Date: July, 16 2010
Subject: Grant Requests

Enclosed please find three (4) requests that the Joint Fiscal Office has received from the administration. These requests include the establishment of nine (9) limited service position.

JFO #2450 — Request from the Department of Labor to establish two limited service positions. These positions will increase the ability of the Department of Labor to conduct timely in-person eligibility reviews. These reviews help determine eligibility and bring claimants into the Career Resource Centers more regularly.
[JFO received 7/12/10]

JFO #2451 — Request from the Department of Labor to establish five limited service positions. These positions will increase the ability of the Department of Labor to re-employ claimants and reduce erroneous payments.
[JFO received 7/12/10]

JFO #2452 — Request from the Department of Health to establish one limited service position. This position will replace a temporary, half-time, position in the WIC Breastfeeding program. The program's expansion has resulted in an increased workload, making a part-time position insufficient to complete the associated duties.
[JFO received 7/16/10]

JFO #2453 — Request from the Department of Public Safety to establish one limited service position. This position will support rural law enforcement investigations by expanding capacity to track and analyze crime trends. Funding for this position is available through an award from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Only the position requires JFC approval. The underlying grant was approved by JFC (#2399) in November, 2009. The Department intended to use a contractor to perform the necessary duties, however, further review indicated that a limited service position was necessary. **Expedited review of this item has been request by the Department. Joint Fiscal Committee members will be contacted by July 23 with a request to waive the statutory review period and accept this item.**
[JFO received 7/16/10]

In accordance with the procedures for processing such requests, we ask you to review the enclosed and notify the Joint Fiscal Office (Nathan Lavery at (802) 828-1488; nlavery@leg.state.vt.us) if you have

questions or would like an item held for Joint Fiscal Committee review. Unless we hear from you to the contrary by July 30 we will assume that you agree to consider as final the Governor's acceptance of these requests.

cc: James Reardon, Commissioner
Valerie Rickert, Commissioner (acting)
Wendy Davis, Commissioner
Thomas Tremblay, Commissioner

[The following text is extremely faint and largely illegible, appearing to be a list of items or a table with multiple columns.]

STATE OF VERMONT
Joint Fiscal Committee Review
Limited Service - Grant Funded
Position Request Form

This form is to be used by agencies and departments when additional grant funded positions are being requested. Review and approval by the Department of Human Resources must be obtained prior to review by the Department of Finance and Management. The Department of Finance will forward requests to the Joint Fiscal Office for JFC review. A Request for Classification Review Form (RFR) and an updated organizational chart showing to whom the new position(s) would report must be attached to this form. Please attach additional pages as necessary to provide enough detail.

Agency/Department: Vermont Department of Labor Date: 06/18/10

Name and Phone (of the person completing this request): Tracy M. Phillips, UI & Wages Director, 828-4242

Request is for:

- Positions funded and attached to a new grant.
- Positions funded and attached to an existing grant approved by JFO # _____

1. Name of Granting Agency, Title of Grant, Grant Funding Detail (attach grant documents):

U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration
Reemployment and Eligibility Assessment (REA) Grant; \$688,156

2. List below titles, number of positions in each title, program area, and limited service end date (information should be based on grant award and should match information provided on the RFR) position(s) will be established only after JFC final approval:

Title* of Position(s) Requested	# of Positions	Division/Program	Grant Funding Period/Anticipated End Date
UC Claims Adjudicator	2	VDOL UI & Wages	01/11/11 - 09/30/11

(Note: These LTD SVC positions(820569,820570) are already created with an end date of 01/10/11. The Department proposes that these LTD SVC positions be sustained from 01/11/11 to 09/30/11 using the attached REA grant \$\$.)

*Final determination of title and pay grade to be made by the Department of Human Resources Classification Division upon submission and review of Request for Classification Review.

3. Justification for this request as an essential grant program need:

To increase the Department's ability to re-employ claimants and reduce erroneous payments. The foundation of the grant proposal is based on a number of studies that found attention to UI beneficiaries' efforts to find employment relative to their re-employment service needs results in shorter claim durations and fewer payments. It is estimated that success with REA could yield Vermont Labor Trust Fund savings of at least \$2.5M.

I certify that this information is correct and that necessary funding, space and equipment for the above position(s) are available (required by 32 VSA Sec. 5(b)).

[Signature] _____ Date: 6/21/10
Signature of Agency or Department Head

[Signature] _____ Date: 6/21/10
Approved/Denied by Department of Human Resources

[Signature] _____ Date: 6/24/10
Approved/Denied by Finance and Management

[Signature] _____ Date: _____
Approved/Denied by Secretary of Administration

Comments:

OK MS 06/24/10

REC'D JUN 24 2010



RECEIVED
JUN 21 2010
BY DHR

Department of Human Resources

Agency of Administration

Job Specifications

you are at: [Home](#) [HR Services](#) [Job Classification](#) [Job Specifications](#)

UC CLAIMS ADJUDICATOR

Job Code: 236600

Pay Plan: Classified

Pay Grade: 19

Occupational Category: Administrative Services, HR & Fiscal Operations

Effective Date: 12/07/2008

Class Definition: Interviewing and analytical work at a technical level for the Vermont Department of Labor involving the adjudication of contested claims for benefits under the Vermont Unemployment Compensation law. Duties include contacting claimants, employers and others to gather information pertaining to claims. Incumbents function within established regulations, policies, and precedent decisions. Work is performed under the direction of the Vermont Department of Labor Adjudications Supervisor.

Examples of Work: Performs central office review of and makes determinations regarding contested unemployment compensation claims. Reviews pertinent testimony from claimants, employers, witnesses and interested parties on separation and non-separation issues. Contacts parties to obtain additional information as needed. Offers opportunities for rebuttal if necessary. Analyzes all available information and writes a formal, quasi-legal determination allowing or denying benefits. May determine chargeability of employers for benefits paid. Provides claimants, employers and authorized representatives with information on contested claims. May testify at Referee hearings as departmental representative. Reviews Referee decisions and may recommend departmental appeals to the Employment Security Board. Keeps abreast of current laws and precedents. Explains law, Department policies, precedents, rules and regulations regarding eligibility, disqualifications and appeals. Assists in the updating and writing of syllabi as assigned. Performs related duties as required.

Environmental Factors: Work is performed in a standard office setting. Significant contact may be required with claimants, employers and other parties to cases. Incumbents must be tactful, but persistent, in fact finding efforts, and maintain objectivity in analysis and determination of cases. Some pressure from deadlines may be experienced.

Minimum Qualifications

Knowledge, Skills and Abilities: Working knowledge of the provisions of the Vermont Unemployment Compensation law and federal laws pertaining to the payment of unemployment compensation benefits.

Working knowledge of Department rules, regulations, precedents, policies, and procedures pertaining to the payment of unemployment compensation benefits.

Ability to interpret and apply pertinent laws, department policies, precedents, rules and regulations to specific cases.

Ability to gather and evaluate facts, write a clear and concise summary of such facts, draw proper conclusions, and render correct and timely decisions.

Ability to deal effectively with claimants, employers, and others in a courteous and knowledgeable manner through written communication or telephone contact.

Education and Experience:

Education: Bachelor's degree.

Experience: One year at or above a technical level in employment services, unemployment compensation programs, customer service or working in a Call Center.

OR

Education: Associate's degree.

Experience: Three years at or above a technical level in employment services, unemployment compensation programs, customer service or working in a Call Center.

OR

Education: High School graduation or equivalent.

Experience: Five years at or above a technical level in employment services, unemployment compensation programs, customer service or working in a Call Center.

Special Requirements: n/a

**UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE
REEMPLOYMENT and ELIGIBILITY ASSESSMENTS
COVER SHEET
(See page 11 for backup)**

State Name: Vermont	
Name and Title of Grant Notification Contact (<i>Usually the State Agency Administrator</i>): Name: Patricia Moulton Powden Title: Commissioner, Vermont Department of Labor Phone: 802-828-4301	
REACT Project Contact. <i>The person who can answer questions about the REACT proposal.</i>	Name: Valerie Rickert
	Telephone: 802-828-4242
	E-mail: valerie.rickert@state.vt.us
Total REACT Project Cost. <i>The total amount of funds requested for the REACT initiative.</i>	\$ 688,156.00
Total Service Delivery Staff Cost. <i>The total amount of funds requested for staff that will conduct the REACTs and excludes other management costs.</i>	\$ 442,556.00 (excludes training time)
Total Management Costs. <i>The total amount of funds requested for administrative/management costs excluding cost of staff who will conduct the REACTs.</i>	\$ 172,860 (excludes training time)
Staff and Management Costs per REACT. <i>The sum of service delivery staff costs and management costs divided by the number of planned REACTs.</i>	\$ 68.82 ($\$688,156.00 \div 10,000$)
Staff Training Costs <i>The total amount of funds requested for staff training to conduct REACTs.</i>	\$ 72,740.00
Projected Time for REACT, Including Paperwork. <i>The total amount of time spent preparing for the REACT, conducting the REACT, recording results and other documentation.</i>	2 hours/REACT (average time)
Total Number of REACT Sites. <i>The total number of sites where REACTs will be conducted; for levels in excess of 10,000 provide the number of sites at each level.</i>	Three primary sites, although some off site work may be done.
Type of Staff Conducting REACTs. <i>Describe the staff that will conduct the REACTs (e.g., UI, One-Stop, Contract, or a combination of staff).</i>	Contracted Career Development Facilitators located in our One-Stops and Agency UI Claims Adjudicators.

**Vermont's FY'09
UI Reemployment and Eligibility Assessment (REA)
Grant Application
(05/22/09)**

Introduction:

As federal funding has decreased over recent years, staff resources to conduct quality and timely eligibility reviews have also decreased. Vermont went from routinely following up on non-job attached claimants every six to eight weeks (depending on the time of year) to sporadically following up on the same pool of claimants. Because staffing resources have been extremely thin, in many cases claimants who file during the winter months may not speak to a Customer Service Representative conducting an eligibility review until three or four months into the filing series. Vermont has already begun to take steps to streamline its current eligibility review process; however, there are limits to the success we will have given the limited resources we have to work with, especially given the current recession and the necessity to require all Claims Center staff to focus on payment and adjudication of astronomical claims load. This grant, in conjunction with the Wagner Reyer Allocation of ARRA funding, would allow Vermont to consistently perform timely and much more valuable in-person eligibility reviews rather than sporadic telephone eligibility reviews. Given Vermont's projection of the trust fund insolvency to occur as soon as November 2009, more stringent and consistent eligibility reviews would become one of several solutions towards trust fund solvency. Additionally, bringing the claimant back into the local Career Resource Centers will more quickly enhance individuals' marketable skills and foster faster job matching.

A. Project Costs

The proposal, as submitted, calls for the assessment of 4,000 individual UI claimants at a total cost of \$688,156.00. Included in the total cost for staff are one full time FTE REA Coordinator, four full time FTE Career Development Facilitators in three One-Stop Resource Centers, one part-time FTE Systems Developer, two full time FTE Claims Adjudicators (see Attachment). The Systems Developer's costs will be a "one time cost" (approximately 26 weeks of time) in order to design and program the participant selection process, comparison pool, centralized employer intelligence application, and prepare the ETA 9128 and 9129 reports.

After taking out estimated systems' start up costs, the cost of assessing 2,000 individuals would be \$344,078.00 and 6,000 would be \$1,032,234.00. Six thousand individuals would be a maximum number for Vermont given the anticipated number of annual claims filed and the need for a comparison group (see discussion in Project Design section on annual numbers of intrastate claims.)

Also included in the proposal is money for travel, the cost of five notebook computers, five docking stations, four printers (three portable and one laser jet), four desktop scanners, three LCD projectors, and two desktop computers. This equipment would allow the Career Development Facilitators to do assessments at locations other than the One-Stops and be used for an orientation to the process and work search expectations, the assessment process and the provision of labor market information. The fifth notebook is for use by the REA Coordinator who will also be mobile and the desktops are for the Claims Adjudicators. The laser jet printer would be shared by the REA Coordinator and the Claims Adjudicators. Please refer to Attachment A for the detailed budget in the format requested.

B. Project Design

The design of Vermont's Reemployment and Eligibility Assessment (REA) program is based on four main elements: 1) the close working relationship that exists among Vermont Department of Labor's (VDOL) Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Wages Division, its Workforce Development Division and its Economic and Labor Market Information Office; 2) our desire and ability to thoroughly conduct in-person UI eligibility reviews; 3) further utilization of Autocoder; and 4) VDOL's Vermont JobLink System which allows on-line labor exchange registration, job search assistance including resume preparation and posting and job matching as well as direct access to labor market job growth projections and existing vacancies. Funds to cover costs related to these normal labor exchange functions (i.e., resume preparation, etc.) will not come from REA funds. During Vermont's first year of its REA program, three One-Stop Resource Centers in three labor market areas have been selected for participation. The three One-Stop Resource Center sites are:

- Burlington (Chittenden, Franklin and Grand Isle Counties) – 2,000 individuals
- Barre (Washington County) – 1,000 individuals

- Rutland (Rutland County) – 1,000 individuals

Historically, approximately 30% of the claims filed are job attached, meaning they have a return to work date and would not be included in the REA population. In 2008, Vermont had 52,036 initial intrastate claims filed. From this total, 6,864 were Barre/Montpelier claimants; 7,107 were Rutland; and 9,655 were Burlington claimants. Using 2008 data, 70% possible REA population, our potential REA claimant counts reduce to 4,804, 4,974, and 6,696 respectively; reserving one-half of this population for comparison, actual REA population to be assessed and worked with reduces to 2,402, 2487, and 3,348 respectively.

Given our potential REA population and the necessity of reserving a comparison group, the total number of UI claimants that will be assessed in Vermont's REA program is 4,000. That equates to approximately 333 individuals per month (83 per staff person) or approximately 20 individuals per each of four staff per week. Each individual will undergo, on average, 2.50 interviews. Total interviews are estimated to be 10,000 over the course of a year. (Note: if it is seen that reaching the goal of 4,000 UI claimants in these three sites is falling short, it would be Vermont's intention to increase the number of One-Stop sites that would participate in the pilot.)

VDOL's Workforce Development Division is actively engaged in developing a broad range of new training options that will include initiatives in green construction, renewable energy, energy efficiency and several high demand health care occupations. We are working closely with the Vermont State College system, regional Technical Centers and other public and private training providers to ensure that training is readily accessible at the local level. In developing specific training options, we have included business associations and public partners such as Associated General Contractors, Renewable Energy Vermont and Efficiency Vermont, to ensure that training will meet current and future business needs.

We will also continue to work closely with our partners at the Department of Economic Development, as they recruit new businesses to Vermont. Whenever possible we will use our state-funded Workforce Education & Training Fund (WETF) to train claimants for new positions.

Vermont also intends to utilize the Wagner Peyser allocation of ARRA funds to provide reemployment services and refer REA participants to training in high growth/high demand jobs as identified in part through Labor Market data and information gathered through various networking of employer intelligence.

Vermont agrees to participate in a U.S. Department of Labor study of the effectiveness of the UI REA initiative. Vermont also agrees to develop a methodology for identifying a comparison group:

1. Selection Process

- Create a population of all persons who have filed an initial claim. From this population we will exclude all people with a "return to work" (RTW).
- With the exclusion of RTWs, a random sample of "every other one" filing a claim, whether matched or not matched, will be selected for the "REA Population." This should allow us to create an "average" group, not the easiest or hardest to employ.
- The ones not selected will become part of a comparison group.
- All job matched individuals will be cross-matched with high growth, high demand occupations as determined by our Economic and Labor Market Information Office.
- All individuals identified to be in the "REA Population" will be referred to contracted staff in one of our three One-Stop Resource Center pilot sites. Additionally, Career Development Facilitators will conduct orientations and assessments at remote locations within the labor market areas using notebook PCs to deliver orientation and labor market information.

2. Assessment Process and/or Referral to Adjudication

- In 2007, Vermont began using Autocoder and staff have been assigning an O*Net Code when an individual establishes a claim through a UI Call Center Interview. The O*Net Code assigned by Autocoder will be reaffirmed during the initial client interview process, at which time the REA Career Development Facilitators will utilize these codes during each assessment to

determine if there are any jobs currently available for the client. Immediate referrals will be made as appropriate. NOTE: As time permits, the REA Career Development Facilitators will also randomly spot check employers' self assigned O*Net Codes to detect and correct possible misclassifications. (Other states have learned this can be a problem; random checks will help Vermont determine if the problem exists here and, if so, steps will be taken to help employers properly code jobs in the future.)

- During the initial client interview process and each assessment thereafter, One-Stop staff will provide individuals with labor market information currently accessible on Labor's web site and a listing of available services accessible through the Resource Center. Other topics that will be covered during the initial client interview are: rights and responsibilities related to UI, methods of looking for a job in the 21st century, and Vermont Department of Labor expectations.
- Through the interview process and the claimant's registration with JobLink, individual needs and/or barriers to employment will be identified and a "service plan" will be created. Able and available issues identified through the interview process will be referred to the adjudication unit for further investigation.
- Other assessment tools such as the O*Net Ability & Interest Profilers will be used as appropriate to assist individuals with career exploration and choice.
- UI claimants deemed to be not job ready will be referred to other intensive services including Workforce Investment Act (WIA) screening for possible job training. NOTE: No REA funds will be used for these other intensive services.
- Given that UI integrity is one of Vermont's main focuses, during each assessment the REA Career Development Facilitator will interview the client to assess his/her continuing eligibility for UI benefits and their adherence to their work search plans. If a participant cannot provide required documentation or the work search efforts cannot be verified, then, as appropriate, the issue will be referred to adjudication.
- Service plan based case notes for individuals who are part of the "REA Population" will be entered into the ServiceLink function of Vermont JobLink by One-Stop staff. These will document actions taken, referrals made, next steps identified. This information will be accessible by authorized staff in UI.

- Quarterly reports with statistical data and measured outcomes will be generated and electronically shared between the UI and Wages Division and the Workforce Development Division, which administers the One-Stops.

C. Projected Performance Improvements

- Over 4,000 UI claimants (REA Population) will participate in the REA Program.
- The overall average time individuals receive UI benefits will be reduced for the REA Population by at least two weeks.
- The anticipated reduction in time people receive UI benefits is projected to save the Trust Fund approximately \$2.5 million.
- Enhanced and earlier job coding in conjunction with Vermont JobLink's job search and job spidering functions, in conjunction with early assessment of transferable job skills will reduce the time it takes the REA Population to re-enter the labor force.
- Following referral to job search staff by REA funded assessment staff (Career Development Facilitators), a job spidering search will take place. The job spidering function of Vermont JobLink brings up every current posting found on the WEB for the specific geographical area requested. Job listings from organizations other than those listed on Vermont JobLink will be accessible which allows the job search process to be highly comprehensive.
- Collaborative use of the Vermont JobLink functions by both the UI and Wages Division and the One-Stop staff in Workforce Development will improve client referral, information flow and, ultimately, placement results.
- More timely assessment of UI claimants will help address the shortage of skilled workers that hampers expansion of Vermont employers. This may lead to greater employer satisfaction.
- Centralized employer intelligence gathered from VDOL Employer Representatives, WIBS, and other employer representative groups will better enable VDOL to know employers needs and provide necessary training to facilitate quicker re-entry into the workforce.
- The project will result in increased integrity of UI payments based on in-person reviews, which will detect and refer potential continued eligibility issues.

D. Estimated Time and Cost for Each Assessment

- On the average, each individual who is part of the REA Population will receive 2.50 interviews.
- Each assessment will vary in length and, therefore, cost is due primarily to time spent by staff. On average, each REA will take two hours.
- Initial assessments and job searches will last the longest and cost the most; later assessments will be shorter, be more progress-review in nature and cost less.
- It will cost, on average, \$172.04 ($\$688,156 \div 4,000$) for each individual claimant assessed and \$68.82 ($\$688,156 \div 10,000$) for each assessment interview.

E. Project Timeline / Staff Training

Depending on when the award is made, the following timeline would apply to the 12-month period:

- First 6 weeks:
 - Recruit and hire staff.
 - Train Career Development Facilitators and REA Coordinator (three weeks learning UI applications, rules and regulations; three weeks learning Workforce services and applications.) Training for UI related information will be done at our Claims Center in Montpelier and Workforce services and applications will be done in our Burlington office.
 - Train Claims Adjudicators (four weeks learning UI applications, rules and regulations; two weeks formulating and writing determinations.) Adjudicators will receive the same UI training as the CDF, with one additional week of training in Central Office learning more in-depth processes related to program integrity.
 - Develop a comparison group
 - Begin development of a central employer intelligence application
 - Program the system for participant selection and referral processes and to prepare necessary programming for reporting (ETA 9128 REA Activities, ETA 9129 REA Outcomes, and others if required.)
- Week 7 on:
 - Assessments, interviews, referrals.
- Monthly meetings of REA staff and One-Stop Managers.

- Every 3 months (quarterly):
 - Regular reporting.
- At ETA's request: Participation in Effectiveness Evaluation.

REA Project Cost			Attachment A
Start-up Costs			
On-time development	# Hours	Cost Per Hour*	Total Cost
Systems Developer III (0.5 FTE)**	1,044	\$65	\$67,860
Supplies			
	Units	Cost Per Unit	Total Cost
Notebook Computers	5	\$1,200	\$6,000
LCD Projectors	3	\$1,099	\$3,297
Portable Printers	3	\$350	\$1,050
Laser Jet Printer	1	\$1,425	\$1,425
Desktop Computers	2	\$1,399	\$2,798
Desktop Scanners***	4	\$325	\$1,300
Docking Stations	5	\$299	\$1,495
			\$17,365
Total Start-up Costs			\$85,225
Remaining Projected Costs			
Staff Position Title	# Hours	Cost Per Hour*	Total Cost
Career Development Facilitator II (4.0 FTEs)	8,352	\$35	\$292,320
Agency Position Title			
	# Hours	Cost Per Hour*	Total Cost
Claims Adjudicator (2.0 FTEs)	4,176	\$45	\$187,920
REA Coordinator (1.0 FTE)	2,088	\$55	\$114,840
			\$302,760
Travel****			
	Miles	Cost Per Mile	Total Cost
	14,274	\$0.55	\$7,851
Total of Remaining Projected Costs			\$602,931
Total REA Project Costs			\$688,156

* Cost Per Hour includes personal services, personnel benefits, non-personal services and administrative support (PS/PB/NPS and AS&T.)

** Systems Developer costs are for start up costs associated with required initial programming, management quarterly reports and preparation of ETA 9128 and 9129 reports. A portion of the REA Coordinator's time will also be used to prepare and submit reports.

*** Scanners will allow electronic transmission of documents to the Claims Center, thereby avoiding mail costs.

**** Travel budget will allow for training in two locations, remote REAs, and monthly meetings of REA staff and regional office managers to insure continuity of the program while enhancing coordination among the department's divisions.

Cover Sheet Backup Page

Doing REAs:

Career Development Facilitators (4)	\$ 258,720 (minus training time)
Adjudicators (2)	166,320 (minus training time)
Notebook Computers (4)	4,800
LCD Projectors (3)	3,297
Portable Printers (3)	1,050
Laser Jet Printer (1)	1,425
Scanners (4)	1,300
Docking Stations (4)	1,196
Desktop Computers (2)	2,798
Travel (3,000 miles)	<u>1,650</u>
	\$ 442,556

Management Costs:

Systems Developer	\$ 67,860
REA Coordinator	101,640 (minus training time)
Notebook Computer (1)	1,200
Docking Station (1)	299
Travel (monthly mtgs. / 3,384 miles)	<u>1,861</u>
	\$172,860

Training:

4 CDFs x 6 weeks =	\$ 33,600
1 REA Coordinator x 6 weeks =	13,200
2 Adjudicators x 6 weeks =	21,600
Travel (7,890 miles) =	<u>4,340</u>
	\$ 72,740

JFO 2450

STATE OF VERMONT
Joint Fiscal Committee Review
Limited Service - Grant Funded
Position Request Form

This form is to be used by agencies and departments when additional grant funded positions are being requested. Review and approval by the Department of Human Resources must be obtained prior to review by the Department of Finance and Management. The Department of Finance will forward requests to the Joint Fiscal Office for JFC review. A Request for Classification Review Form (RFR) and an updated organizational chart showing to whom the new position(s) would report must be attached to this form. Please attach additional pages as necessary to provide enough detail.

Agency/Department: Vermont Department of Labor Date: 06/18/10

Name and Phone (of the person completing this request): Tracy M. Phillips, UI & Wages Director, 828-4242

Request is for:

- Positions funded and attached to a new grant.
- Positions funded and attached to an existing grant approved by JFO # _____

1. Name of Granting Agency, Title of Grant, Grant Funding Detail (attach grant documents):

U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration
Reemployment and Eligibility Assessment (REA) Grant; \$688,156

2. List below titles, number of positions in each title, program area, and limited service end date (information should be based on grant award and should match information provided on the RFR) position(s) will be established only after JFC final approval:

Title* of Position(s) Requested	# of Positions	Division/Program	Grant Funding Period/Anticipated End Date
UC Claims Adjudicator	2	VDOL UI & Wages	01/11/11 - 09/30/11

(Note: These LTD SVC positions(820569,820570) are already created with an end date of 01/10/11. The Depart. proposes that these LTD SVC positions be sustained from 01/11/11 to 09/30/11 using the attached REA grant \$\$.)

*Final determination of title and pay grade to be made by the Department of Human Resources Classification Division upon submission and review of Request for Classification Review.

3. Justification for this request as an essential grant program need:

To increase the Department's ability to re-employ claimants and reduce erroneous payments. The foundation of the grant proposal is based on a number of studies that found attention to UI beneficiaries' efforts to find employment relative to their re-employment service needs results in shorter claim durations and fewer payments. It is estimated that success with REA could yield Vermont Labor Trust Fund savings of at least \$2.5M.

I certify that this information is correct and that necessary funding, space and equipment for the above position(s) are available (required by 32 VSA Sec. 5(b)).

[Signature] Signature of Agency or Department Head Date: 6/21/10

[Signature] Approved/Denied by Department of Human Resources Date: 6/21/10

[Signature] Approved/Denied by Finance and Management Date: 6/24/10

[Signature] Approved/Denied by Secretary of Administration Date: 6/24/10

Comments:

OK MS 6/24/10



REC'D JUN 24 2010

RECEIVED
JUN 21 2010
BY DHR

[Faint handwritten text]

[Handwritten signature]

Department of Human Resources

Agency of Administration

Job Specifications

you are at: [Home](#) [HR Services](#) [Job Classification](#) [Job Specifications](#)

UC CLAIMS ADJUDICATOR

Job Code: 236600

Pay Plan: Classified

Pay Grade: 19

Occupational Category: Administrative Services, HR & Fiscal Operations

Effective Date: 12/07/2008

Class Definition: Interviewing and analytical work at a technical level for the Vermont Department of Labor involving the adjudication of contested claims for benefits under the Vermont Unemployment Compensation law. Duties include contacting claimants, employers and others to gather information pertaining to claims. Incumbents function within established regulations, policies, and precedent decisions. Work is performed under the direction of the Vermont Department of Labor Adjudications Supervisor.

Examples of Work: Performs central office review of and makes determinations regarding contested unemployment compensation claims. Reviews pertinent testimony from claimants, employers, witnesses and interested parties on separation and non-separation issues. Contacts parties to obtain additional information as needed. Offers opportunities for rebuttal if necessary. Analyzes all available information and writes a formal, quasi-legal determination allowing or denying benefits. May determine chargeability of employers for benefits paid. Provides claimants, employers and authorized representatives with information on contested claims. May testify at Referee hearings as departmental representative. Reviews Referee decisions and may recommend departmental appeals to the Employment Security Board. Keeps abreast of current laws and precedents. Explains law, Department policies, precedents, rules and regulations regarding eligibility, disqualifications and appeals. Assists in the updating and writing of syllabi as assigned. Performs related duties as required.

Environmental Factors: Work is performed in a standard office setting. Significant contact may be required with claimants, employers and other parties to cases. Incumbents must be tactful, but persistent, in fact finding efforts, and maintain objectivity in analysis and determination of cases. Some pressure from deadlines may be experienced.

Minimum Qualifications

Knowledge, Skills and Abilities: Working knowledge of the provisions of the Vermont Unemployment Compensation law and federal laws pertaining to the payment of unemployment compensation benefits.

Working knowledge of Department rules, regulations, precedents, policies, and procedures pertaining to the payment of unemployment compensation benefits.

Ability to interpret and apply pertinent laws, department policies, precedents, rules and regulations to specific cases.

Ability to gather and evaluate facts, write a clear and concise summary of such facts, draw proper conclusions, and render correct and timely decisions.

Ability to deal effectively with claimants, employers, and others in a courteous and knowledgeable manner through written communication or telephone contact.

Education and Experience:

Education: Bachelor's degree.

Experience: One year at or above a technical level in employment services, unemployment compensation programs, customer service or working in a Call Center.

OR

Education: Associate's degree.

Experience: Three years at or above a technical level in employment services, unemployment compensation programs, customer service or working in a Call Center.

OR

Education: High School graduation or equivalent.

Experience: Five years at or above a technical level in employment services, unemployment compensation programs, customer service or working in a Call Center.

Special Requirements: n/a

**UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE
REEMPLOYMENT and ELIGIBILITY ASSESSMENTS
COVER SHEET
(See page 11 for backup)**

State Name: Vermont	
Name and Title of Grant Notification Contact (<i>Usually the State Agency Administrator</i>): Name: Patricia Moulton Powden Title: Commissioner, Vermont Department of Labor Phone: 802-828-4301	
REACT Project Contact. <i>The person who can answer questions about the REACT proposal.</i>	Name: Valerie Rickert
	Telephone: 802-828-4242
	E-mail: valerie.rickert@state.vt.us
Total REACT Project Cost. <i>The total amount of funds requested for the REACT initiative.</i>	\$ 688,156.00
Total Service Delivery Staff Cost. <i>The total amount of funds requested for staff that will conduct the REACTs and excludes other management costs.</i>	\$ 442,556.00 (excludes training time)
Total Management Costs. <i>The total amount of funds requested for administrative/management costs excluding cost of staff who will conduct the REACTs.</i>	\$ 172,860 (excludes training time)
Staff and Management Costs per REACT. <i>The sum of service delivery staff costs and management costs divided by the number of planned REACTs.</i>	\$ 68.82 ($\$688,156.00 \div 10,000$)
Staff Training Costs <i>The total amount of funds requested for staff training to conduct REACTs.</i>	\$ 72,740.00
Projected Time for REACT, Including Paperwork. <i>The total amount of time spent preparing for the REACT, conducting the REACT, recording results and other documentation.</i>	2 hours/REACT (average time)
Total Number of REACT Sites. <i>The total number of sites where REACTs will be conducted; for levels in excess of 10,000 provide the number of sites at each level.</i>	Three primary sites, although some off site work may be done.
Type of Staff Conducting REACTs. <i>Describe the staff that will conduct the REACTs (e.g., UI, One-Stop, Contract, or a combination of staff).</i>	Contracted Career Development Facilitators located in our One-Stops and Agency UI Claims Adjudicators.

**Vermont's FY'09
UI Reemployment and Eligibility Assessment (REA)
Grant Application
(05/22/09)**

Introduction:

As federal funding has decreased over recent years, staff resources to conduct quality and timely eligibility reviews have also decreased. Vermont went from routinely following up on non-job attached claimants every six to eight weeks (depending on the time of year) to sporadically following up on the same pool of claimants. Because staffing resources have been extremely thin, in many cases claimants who file during the winter months may not speak to a Customer Service Representative conducting an eligibility review until three or four months into the filing series. Vermont has already begun to take steps to streamline its current eligibility review process; however, there are limits to the success we will have given the limited resources we have to work with; especially given the current recession and the necessity to require all Claims Center staff to focus on payment and adjudication of astronomical claims load. This grant, in conjunction with the Wagner Peyser Allocation of ARRA funding, would allow Vermont to consistently perform timely and much more valuable in-person eligibility reviews rather than sporadic telephone eligibility reviews. Given Vermont's projection of the trust fund insolvency to occur as soon as November 2009, more stringent and consistent eligibility reviews would become one of several solutions towards trust fund solvency. Additionally, bringing the claimant back into the local Career Resource Centers will more quickly enhance individuals' marketable skills and foster faster job matching.

A. Project Costs

The proposal, as submitted, calls for the assessment of 4,000 individual UI claimants at a total cost of \$688,156.00. Included in the total cost for staff are one full time FTE REA Coordinator, four full time FTE Career Development Facilitators in three One-Stop Resource Centers, one part-time FTE Systems Developer, two full time FTE Claims Adjudicators (see Attachment). The Systems Developer's costs will be a "one time cost" (approximately 26 weeks of time) in order to design and program the participant selection process, comparison pool, centralized employer intelligence application, and prepare the ETA 9128 and 9129 reports.

After taking out estimated systems' start up costs, the cost of assessing 2,000 individuals would be \$344,078.00 and 6,000 would be \$1,032,234.00. Six thousand individuals would be a maximum number for Vermont given the anticipated number of annual claims filed and the need for a comparison group (see discussion in Project Design section on annual numbers of intrastate claims.)

Also included in the proposal is money for travel, the cost of five notebook computers, five docking stations, four printers (three portable and one laser jet), four desktop scanners, three LCD projectors, and two desktop computers. This equipment would allow the Career Development Facilitators to do assessments at locations other than the One-Stops and be used for an orientation to the process and work search expectations, the assessment process and the provision of labor market information. The fifth notebook is for use by the REA Coordinator who will also be mobile and the desktops are for the Claims Adjudicators. The laser jet printer would be shared by the REA Coordinator and the Claims Adjudicators. Please refer to Attachment A for the detailed budget in the format requested.

B. Project Design

The design of Vermont's Reemployment and Eligibility Assessment (REA) program is based on four main elements: 1) the close working relationship that exists among Vermont Department of Labor's (VDOL) Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Wages Division, its Workforce Development Division and its Economic and Labor Market Information Office; 2) our desire and ability to thoroughly conduct in-person UI eligibility reviews; 3) further utilization of Autocoder; and 4) VDOL's Vermont JobLink System which allows on-line labor exchange registration, job search assistance including resume preparation and posting and job matching as well as direct access to labor market job growth projections and existing vacancies. Funds to cover costs related to these normal labor exchange functions (i.e., resume preparation, etc.) will not come from REA funds. During Vermont's first year of its REA program, three One-Stop Resource Centers in three labor market areas have been selected for participation. The three One-Stop Resource Center sites are:

- Burlington (Chittenden, Franklin and Grand Isle Counties) – 2,000 individuals
- Barre (Washington County) – 1,000 individuals

- Rutland (Rutland County) – 1,000 individuals

Historically, approximately 30% of the claims filed are job attached, meaning they have a return to work date and would not be included in the REA population. In 2008, Vermont had 52,036 initial intrastate claims filed. From this total, 6,864 were Barre/Montpelier claimants; 7,107 were Rutland; and 9,655 were Burlington claimants. Using 2008 data, 70% possible REA population, our potential REA claimant counts reduce to 4,804, 4,974, and 6,696 respectively; reserving one-half of this population for comparison, actual REA population to be assessed and worked with reduces to 2,402, 2487, and 3,348 respectively.

Given our potential REA population and the necessity of reserving a comparison group, the total number of UI claimants that will be assessed in Vermont's REA program is 4,000. That equates to approximately 333 individuals per month (83 per staff person) or approximately 20 individuals per each of four staff per week. Each individual will undergo, on average, 2.50 interviews. Total interviews are estimated to be 10,000 over the course of a year. (Note: if it is seen that reaching the goal of 4,000 UI claimants in these three sites is falling short, it would be Vermont's intention to increase the number of One-Stop sites that would participate in the pilot.)

VDOL's Workforce Development Division is actively engaged in developing a broad range of new training options that will include initiatives in green construction, renewable energy, energy efficiency and several high demand health care occupations. We are working closely with the Vermont State College system, regional Technical Centers and other public and private training providers to ensure that training is readily accessible at the local level. In developing specific training options, we have included business associations and public partners such as Associated General Contractors, Renewable Energy Vermont and Efficiency Vermont, to ensure that training will meet current and future business needs.

We will also continue to work closely with our partners at the Department of Economic Development, as they recruit new businesses to Vermont. Whenever possible we will use our state-funded Workforce Education & Training Fund (WETF) to train claimants for new positions.

Vermont also intends to utilize the Wagner Peyser allocation of ARRA funds to provide reemployment services and refer REA participants to training in high growth/high demand jobs as identified in part through Labor Market data and information gathered through various networking of employer intelligence.

Vermont agrees to participate in a U.S. Department of Labor study of the effectiveness of the UI REA initiative. Vermont also agrees to develop a methodology for identifying a comparison group:

1. Selection Process

- Create a population of all persons who have filed an initial claim. From this population we will exclude all people with a "return to work" (RTW).
- With the exclusion of RTWs, a random sample of "every other one" filing a claim, whether matched or not matched, will be selected for the "REA Population." This should allow us to create an "average" group, not the easiest or hardest to employ.
- The ones not selected will become part of a comparison group.
- All job matched individuals will be cross-matched with high growth, high demand occupations as determined by our Economic and Labor Market Information Office.
- All individuals identified to be in the "REA Population" will be referred to contracted staff in one of our three One-Stop Resource Center pilot sites. Additionally, Career Development Facilitators will conduct orientations and assessments at remote locations within the labor market areas using notebook PCs to deliver orientation and labor market information.

2. Assessment Process and/or Referral to Adjudication

- In 2007, Vermont began using Autocoder and staff have been assigning an O*Net Code when an individual establishes a claim through a UI Call Center Interview. The O*Net Code assigned by Autocoder will be reaffirmed during the initial client interview process, at which time the REA Career Development Facilitators will utilize these codes during each assessment to

determine if there are any jobs currently available for the client. Immediate referrals will be made as appropriate. NOTE: As time permits, the REA Career Development Facilitators will also randomly spot check employers' self assigned O*Net Codes to detect and correct possible misclassifications. (Other states have learned this can be a problem; random checks will help Vermont determine if the problem exists here and, if so, steps will be taken to help employers properly code jobs in the future.)

- During the initial client interview process and each assessment thereafter, One-Stop staff will provide individuals with labor market information currently accessible on Labor's web site and a listing of available services accessible through the Resource Center. Other topics that will be covered during the initial client interview are: rights and responsibilities related to UI, methods of looking for a job in the 21st century, and Vermont Department of Labor expectations.
- Through the interview process and the claimant's registration with JobLink, individual needs and/or barriers to employment will be identified and a "service plan" will be created. Able and available issues identified through the interview process will be referred to the adjudication unit for further investigation.
- Other assessment tools such as the O*Net Ability & Interest Profilers will be used as appropriate to assist individuals with career exploration and choice.
- UI claimants deemed to be not job ready will be referred to other intensive services including Workforce Investment Act (WIA) screening for possible job training. NOTE: No REA funds will be used for these other intensive services.
- Given that UI integrity is one of Vermont's main focuses, during each assessment the REA Career Development Facilitator will interview the client to assess his/her continuing eligibility for UI benefits and their adherence to their work search plans. If a participant cannot provide required documentation or the work search efforts cannot be verified, then, as appropriate, the issue will be referred to adjudication.
- Service plan based case notes for individuals who are part of the "REA Population" will be entered into the ServiceLink function of Vermont JobLink by One-Stop staff. These will document actions taken, referrals made, next steps identified. This information will be accessible by authorized staff in UI.

- Quarterly reports with statistical data and measured outcomes will be generated and electronically shared between the UI and Wages Division and the Workforce Development Division, which administers the One-Stops.

C. Projected Performance Improvements

- Over 4,000 UI claimants (REA Population) will participate in the REA Program.
- The overall average time individuals receive UI benefits will be reduced for the REA Population by at least two weeks.
- The anticipated reduction in time people receive UI benefits is projected to save the Trust Fund approximately \$2.5 million.
- Enhanced and earlier job coding in conjunction with Vermont JobLink's job search and job spidering functions, in conjunction with early assessment of transferable job skills will reduce the time it takes the REA Population to re-enter the labor force.
- Following referral to job search staff by REA funded assessment staff (Career Development Facilitators), a job spidering search will take place. The job spidering function of Vermont JobLink brings up every current posting found on the WEB for the specific geographical area requested. Job listings from organizations other than those listed on Vermont JobLink will be accessible which allows the job search process to be highly comprehensive.
- Collaborative use of the Vermont JobLink functions by both the UI and Wages Division and the One-Stop staff in Workforce Development will improve client referral, information flow and, ultimately, placement results.
- More timely assessment of UI claimants will help address the shortage of skilled workers that hampers expansion of Vermont employers. This may lead to greater employer satisfaction.
- Centralized employer intelligence gathered from VDOL Employer Representatives, WIBS, and other employer representative groups will better enable VDOL to know employers needs and provide necessary training to facilitate quicker re-entry into the workforce.
- The project will result in increased integrity of UI payments based on in-person reviews, which will detect and refer potential continued eligibility issues.

D. Estimated Time and Cost for Each Assessment

- On the average, each individual who is part of the REA Population will receive 2.50 interviews.
- Each assessment will vary in length and, therefore, cost is due primarily to time spent by staff. On average, each REA will take two hours.
- Initial assessments and job searches will last the longest and cost the most; later assessments will be shorter, be more progress-review in nature and cost less.
- It will cost, on average, \$172.04 ($\$688,156 \div 4,000$) for each individual claimant assessed and \$68.82 ($\$688,156 \div 10,000$) for each assessment interview.

E. Project Timeline / Staff Training

Depending on when the award is made, the following timeline would apply to the 12-month period:

- First 6 weeks:
 - Recruit and hire staff.
 - Train Career Development Facilitators and REA Coordinator (three weeks learning UI applications, rules and regulations; three weeks learning Workforce services and applications.) Training for UI related information will be done at our Claims Center in Montpelier and Workforce services and applications will be done in our Burlington office.
 - Train Claims Adjudicators (four weeks learning UI applications, rules and regulations; two weeks formulating and writing determinations.) Adjudicators will receive the same UI training as the CDF, with one additional week of training in Central Office learning more in-depth processes related to program integrity.
 - Develop a comparison group
 - Begin development of a central employer intelligence application
 - Program the system for participant selection and referral processes and to prepare necessary programming for reporting (ETA 9128 REA Activities, ETA 9129 REA Outcomes, and others if required.)
- Week 7 on:
 - Assessments, interviews, referrals.
- Monthly meetings of REA staff and One-Stop Managers.

- Every 3 months (quarterly):
 - Regular reporting.
- At ETA's request: Participation in Effectiveness Evaluation.

REA Project Cost			Attachment A
Start-up Costs			
On-time development	# Hours	Cost Per Hour*	Total Cost
Systems Developer III (0.5 FTE)**	1,044	\$65	\$67,860
Supplies			
	Units	Cost Per Unit	Total Cost
Notebook Computers	5	\$1,200	\$6,000
LCD Projectors	3	\$1,099	\$3,297
Portable Printers	3	\$350	\$1,050
Laser Jet Printer	1	\$1,425	\$1,425
Desktop Computers	2	\$1,399	\$2,798
Desktop Scanners***	4	\$325	\$1,300
Docking Stations	5	\$299	\$1,495
			\$17,365
Total Start-up Costs			\$85,225
Remaining Projected Costs			
Staff Position Title	# Hours	Cost Per Hour*	Total Cost
Career Development Facilitator II (4.0 FTEs)	8,352	\$35	\$292,320
Agency Position Title			
	# Hours	Cost Per Hour*	Total Cost
Claims Adjudicator (2.0 FTEs)	4,176	\$45	\$187,920
REA Coordinator (1.0 FTE)	2,088	\$55	\$114,840
			\$302,760
Travel****			
	Miles	Cost Per Mile	Total Cost
	14,274	\$0.55	\$7,851
Total of Remaining Projected Costs			\$602,931
Total REA Project Costs			\$688,156

* Cost Per Hour includes personal services, personnel benefits, non-personal services and administrative support (PS/PB/NPS and AS&T.)

** Systems Developer costs are for start up costs associated with required initial programming, management quarterly reports and preparation of ETA 9128 and 9129 reports. A portion of the REA Coordinator's time will also be used to prepare and submit reports.

*** Scanners will allow electronic transmission of documents to the Claims Center, thereby avoiding mail costs.

**** Travel budget will allow for training in two locations, remote REAs, and monthly meetings of REA staff and regional office managers to insure continuity of the program while enhancing coordination among the department's divisions.

Cover Sheet Backup Page

Doing REAs:

Career Development Facilitators (4)	\$ 258,720 (minus training time)
Adjudicators (2)	166,320 (minus training time)
Notebook Computers (4)	4,800
LCD Projectors (3)	3,297
Portable Printers (3)	1,050
Laser Jet Printer (1)	1,425
Scanners (4)	1,300
Docking Stations (4)	1,196
Desktop Computers (2)	2,798
Travel (3,000 miles)	<u>1,650</u>
	\$ 442,556

Management Costs:

Systems Developer	\$ 67,860
REA Coordinator	101,640 (minus training time)
Notebook Computer (1)	1,200
Docking Station (1)	299
Travel (monthly mtgs. / 3,384 miles)	<u>1,861</u>
	\$172,860

Training:

4 CDFs x 6 weeks =	\$ 33,600
1 REA Coordinator x 6 weeks =	13,200
2 Adjudicators x 6 weeks =	21,600
Travel (7,890 miles) =	<u>4,340</u>
	\$ 72,740

Ms. Patricia M. Powden
Commissioner
Vermont Department of Labor
5 Green Mountain Drive
P. O. Box 488
Montpelier, Vermont 05601-0488

Dear Ms. Powden:

Your agency's request for funds to implement your Reemployment and Eligibility Assessment (REA) initiative has been approved in the amount of \$688,156, under authority of Section 302 of the Social Security Act. Use of these funds is limited to the expenditures identified in your Supplemental Budget Request (SBR) for the approved project.

The Federal Grant Officer will issue a Notice of Obligation for these funds. As a condition of this grant, cumulative expenditures during the life of this project should be reported on an ETA Financial Report (ETA 9130) established for these funds. Also, please coordinate your state's reporting with your regional Federal Project Officer (FPO).

The obligation and expenditure of these funds should adhere to the spending plan submitted in the State's REA proposal. Such plans require that the effective date be no earlier than March 11, 2009, and funds to be obligated on or before September 30, 2011 and liquidated within 90 days of that date.

We recognize that proposals include cost estimates that may change. If changes of twenty percent or more in any specific category on the SF 424A budget occur, a letter requesting approval of the change along with applicable grant documents must be submitted by the agency signatory official to the Regional Office to amend the budget and plan. Because approval of the Grant Officer is required, requests for these changes, including an explanation of the proposed changes and applicable budget information, should be submitted as soon as the required information is available. Pursuant to 29 CFR 97.23, requests to amend the plan/budget should be submitted at least thirty days prior to the end of the obligation period, and requests to extend the expenditure/liquidation period should be submitted at least thirty days prior to the end of the liquidation period. Please reference the SBR name and the UI Agreement grant number in any future correspondence relating to this SBR.

As noted in Unemployment Insurance Program Letter 23-09, a SF 424 and a SF 424A must be submitted within 10 days of the award notification. These documents should be submitted electronically to the email address: ows.sbr@dol.gov. In addition, please include the projected date of implementation in the email.

Best wishes for the successful implementation of your REA initiative.

Sincerely,

CHERYL ATKINSON
Administrator
Office of Workforce Security

EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ADMINISTRATION ADVISORY SYSTEM U. S. Department of Labor Washington, D.C. 20210	CLASSIFICATION UI
	CORRESPONDENCE SYMBOL OWS/DUIO
	DATE April 20, 2009

ADVISORY: UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE PROGRAM LETTER 23-09

TO: STATE WORKFORCE AGENCIES

FROM: DOUGLAS F. SMALL *Douglas F. Small*
 Deputy Assistant Secretary

SUBJECT: Fiscal Year (FY) 2009 Unemployment Insurance (UI)
 Reemployment and Eligibility Assessment (REA) Grants

- 1. Purpose.** To invite the submission of proposals from State Workforce Agencies (SWAs) to implement or expand UI REA initiatives; to provide guidelines for developing the proposals; and to provide criteria governing the use of these funds.
- 2. References.** Regional Office issuances regarding the REAs for FY 2005 and FY 2006; Unemployment Insurance Program Letter (UIPL) No. 30-06, Fiscal Year (FY) 2007 Unemployment Insurance (UI) Reemployment and Eligibility Assessment (REA) Grants; UIPL No. 25-07, Fiscal Year (FY) 2008 Unemployment Insurance (UI) Reemployment and Eligibility Assessment (REA) Grants; *Federal Register Notice* - Volume 70, Number 163, dated August 24, 2005; ET Handbook No. 401; ET Handbook No. 402; Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) No. 14-08 Guidance for Implementation of the Workforce Investment Act and Wagner-Peyser Act Funding in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 and State Planning Requirements for Program Year 2009; ETA Occasional Paper No. 2004-01 Internet Initial Claims Evaluation - Section V, Reemployment Assistance and Continuing Eligibility; ETA Occasional Paper No. 2002-09 Evaluation of the Significant Improvement Demonstration Grants for the Provision of Reemployment Services for UI Claimants; and ETA Occasional Paper No. 2000-01 Unemployment Insurance in the One-Stop Delivery System.
- 3. Background.** The reemployment of UI claimants and the reduction of erroneous payments are high priorities for the UI program. The Department is promoting better integration of UI claims and reemployment services through the REA grants. A number of studies have found that attention to UI beneficiaries' efforts to find new jobs and attention to their reemployment service needs result in shorter claim durations and fewer erroneous payments. The REA initiative was implemented to provide resources to states to focus such attention on UI beneficiaries. A total of 18 states are operating REA initiatives during FY 2009.

RESCISSIONS None	EXPIRATION DATE April 20, 2010
----------------------------	--

4. **FY 2009 Funding.** A total of \$50 million is available in FY 2009 for REAs and similar activities. This significant increase in funding availability gives states with current REA initiatives the opportunity to apply for funds to expand those initiatives to additional areas within the state and to provide assessments to a larger number of beneficiaries. In addition, states that are interested in implementing new REA initiatives have the opportunity to apply for funding.

It is critical that REA initiatives, both continuing and newly implemented, are an integral part of their respective states' strategies for Reemployment Services (RES) grants provided by the Recovery Act. RES funds available under the Recovery Act may be used to upgrade information technology and improve linkage, communication, and data transfer between UI, Wagner-Peyser, and One-Stop Career Center information systems (See TEGL-14-08). These funds, in combination with REA funds, offer states a unique opportunity to build the data and communication linkages needed to better target services, eliminate redundant data collection, and improve management information.

Participating states were provided funds at the FY 2008 funding level under the 2009 continuing resolution. These states may now submit proposals to provide REAs to a larger number of beneficiaries. If appropriate, states may provide notification that a lower amount of funding is needed in FY 2009 than was provided in FY 2008. This will not adversely impact future requests. To submit a request for additional funding, states with existing REA initiatives should update their 2008 proposals with the appropriate workload counts and the related costs. States that are not currently participating may submit proposals to implement the REA initiative.

Additional funds for states with an existing REA initiative are to be obligated by March 31, 2010. Funds for states wishing to implement a new REA initiative are to be obligated within one year of the projected date of implementation. The date of implementation is the date that the first REA participant is scheduled to report to a One-Stop Career Center.

5. **Guidelines.** Funds must be used to assess the continued eligibility and reemployment needs of UI beneficiaries and are not intended to supplant UI grant funds devoted to eligibility reviews. States do not have to implement the REA initiative statewide. Assessments are to be conducted only for UI beneficiaries who do not have a definite return-to-work date.

Providing general information about the labor market, developing a work search plan, assessing an individual's need for reemployment services, and making referrals to reemployment services are all an integral part of the REA effort. They are part of ensuring that claimants are doing what a reasonable person in his or her circumstances should do to find suitable work. However, providing reemployment services such as resume writing or interviewing workshops and job placement activities are not permissible uses of UI grant funds, and these costs should not be included in the state's proposal.

The Department is actively fostering the provision of services to UI claimants through funds for reemployment services available under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. These Reemployment Services (RES) funds provide a unique opportunity to

strengthen partnerships between the One-Stop Career Center and UI claimants which can continue after these funds end. States applying for a new or continuing REA grant should consider how they can integrate REA activities with the RES initiative in their state.

The following guidelines also apply:

- a. UI beneficiaries must be required to report in person to the One-Stop Career Center for staff-assisted services as a part of the REA.
 - b. Assessments must include:
 1. A review of continued eligibility and referral to adjudication, as appropriate, when a potential issue is identified.
 2. The provision of labor market information.
 3. Development or review of a work search plan.
 4. A referral to employment services (e.g. job search assistance workshops or job placement services) or to occupational or skills training, when appropriate.
 - c. A measure of program effectiveness will be derived by comparing outcomes of REA program participants with outcomes from a similar group of claimants who did not participate in the REA program. Therefore, states receiving REA grant funds must agree to develop a methodology for identifying a comparison group. However, the specific methodology to be utilized is not required to be included in the state's REA proposal. If needed, the Department will provide states with technical assistance in developing an appropriate comparison group methodology, to ensure that the comparison group will provide an accurate population for assessing the results of the state's REA initiative.
 - d. The state must submit required REA reports. These reports are the ETA 9128 - Reemployment and Eligibility Assessments Activities report and the ETA 9129 - Reemployment and Eligibility Assessments Outcomes report (OMB Approval No. 1205-0456). These reports capture specific data about the REA program participants and the comparison group. States submitting REA proposals for the first time may request funds to develop these required reports. States that currently operate a REA initiative received the funds for the development of these reports.
 - e. The state must agree to participate in any U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) funded studies of the effectiveness of this UI REA initiative. Results may be used to prepare a report to Congress.
6. **Proposal Format and Instructions.** The format and instructions for preparing the UI REA grant proposals are provided in the following attachments. Attachment A provides the guidance for states that have not received a REA grant. Attachment B is the Cover Sheet and is required for all proposals. All pages in the state's proposal should be numbered.

Each proposal should contain the name and telephone number of the person who is to be notified of approval of the grant. In most instances, this individual will be the state

administrator. Proposals should also include the name, telephone number and e-mail address of the individual who can respond to questions about the proposal.

Completed Standard Form (SF) 424 (Revised 10-2005), and SF 424A must be submitted for all REA grants within 10 days of the notification of the grant award. 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.

7. **UI REA Grant Scoring Criteria.** The REA scoring criteria are explained in Attachment A and apply to states that have not previously participated in the REA initiative. The highest scoring proposal will be funded first followed in sequence by those with lower scores until all available funds are exhausted. States must follow the proposal outline. Each element of the proposal is important and should be addressed completely. Proposals should explain how the proposed program will work and include complete names and titles rather than acronyms and form numbers. Proposals scoring fewer than 80 points will not be funded.
8. **Supplemental Budget Request (SBR) Procedures.** States are encouraged to work with Regional Office staff while they are developing their proposals. States should ensure that:
 - a. The UI-REA project design meets the needs of UI beneficiaries;
 - b. UI and One-Stop Career Center staff work cooperatively in planning, developing, testing, and implementing this project;
 - c. The proposed expenditures are appropriate; and
 - d. The state can provide data for the required reports.
9. **Timelines.**
 - a. States must submit proposals to the National Office by May 8, 2009.
 - b. Award notifications will be issued by May 29, 2009.
 - c. States must submit an SF 424 and an SF 424A within 10 days of the award notification.
10. **Action Requested.** State Administrators are requested to:
 - a. Provide information contained in this UIPL to appropriate staff.
 - b. Send, via e-mail, an electronic copy of the proposal and the UI REA Cover Sheet to ows.sbr@dol.gov no later than May 8, 2009.
 - c. Upon notification of the grant award, states must submit an SF 424, and SF 424A at the appropriate level of funding signed by the state administrator.
11. **Inquiries.** Direct questions to Diane Wood at 202-693-3212, or to wood.diane@dol.gov.
12. **Attachments.**
 - A. UI REA Proposal Outline for First Year REA Grants
 - B. Unemployment Insurance Reemployment and Eligibility Assessment Cover Sheet

Attachment A

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE (UI) REEMPLOYMENT AND ELIGIBILITY ASSESSMENT (REA) PROPOSAL OUTLINE FOR FIRST YEAR REA GRANTS

1. **UI REA Grant Project Summary.** States should use this outline to develop proposals to implement the UI REA initiative. All proposals must include the Cover Sheet found in Attachment B.
2. **Project Costs.** Proposals must include a description of proposed expenditures and a projected schedule for significant project activities. The costs should be identified separately as start-up costs and the projected costs for one year of operation. Start up costs would include the costs of staff training, program implementation, automation costs related to the delivery and records keeping necessary for the REA initiative and the costs of developing the ETA 9128 and the ETA 9129. Any proposed expenditures that do not include all of the required information will not be funded.

Fixed Minimum Costs: The proposal should include fixed minimum costs. As a part of the fixed minimum costs, the proposal should describe the costs to implement the UI REA program and conduct the first 10,000 assessments. Fixed costs should also include the projected costs for programming the ETA 9128 and ETA 9129 reports as a one-time cost. Reporting instructions can be found in ET Handbook No. 401 and edits for these two reports can be found in ET Handbook No. 402. These instructions should assist in determining the approximate programming time needed to develop these required reports. The costs for programming these reports should be clearly identified in the project costs.

Incremental Costs: If the state proposes to conduct more than 10,000 REAs the proposal should also include incremental costs. These costs should be expressed as costs per 10,000 assessments. States that do not wish to perform more than 10,000 assessments do not need to submit this information. Incremental costs consist primarily of costs related to service delivery (i.e., conducting the REA) rather than costs such as development of management information systems. Regardless of the total number of proposed REAs, states should ensure that costs are provided on a sliding scale at 10,000 increments as it may be possible to increase partially, but not possible to fund very large numbers of REAs.

3. **Scoring Elements.** The following elements are used to score the proposal. Proposals must have a score of 80 points or more to be recommended for funding. Therefore, each element is important and should be addressed fully in the proposal. Proposals should use the following format.

a. Project Costs (15 percent of total score):

- i. **Staff Costs.** The proposal should identify both state staffing needs (in excess of base staff) and any contract staff needs. Staff needs should include the type of position, the expected number of staff hours, and the projected hourly cost. States should identify separately all staff costs for developing REA reports and programming requirements separate from the costs for providing REAs to claimants. States should include information in the following format for all staff requests.

Position Title	# Hours	Cost Per Hour	Total Cost
Claims Examiner	120	\$50	\$6,000

States should charge all staff time utilized for the REA initiative to an REA project code.

If contract staff is requested, documentation should include the type of position, estimated contract staff hours, anticipated costs per hour, and total cost.

- ii. **Other.** The proposal should include costs for other activities and/or equipment, not identified above. Each cost should be broken down to the specific cost item with a description of each cost and the associated costs for each item requested. All costs must be related to providing REAs to claimants.

b. Project Design (45 percent of total score):

A description of the UI REA initiative should address all key aspects of the design. States should explain what will occur when the claimant reports to the One-Stop Career Center for an REA. The description should include the elements below.

- How beneficiaries will be selected for the assessments. The proposal should identify the target group for their REA initiative. For example, states have tried varied methods including focusing on those claimants most likely to exhaust their benefits, focusing on claimants with a lower profiling score who might be likely to return to work more quickly, and focusing on claimants who have job skills that are in high demand.
- The proposed staffing arrangements for conducting assessments at the One-Stop Career Center facility. States should ensure that proposed staffing arrangements have been agreed upon by all parties prior to submitting the REA proposal.
- How beneficiaries will be referred to reemployment services.
- How staff training will be conducted.
- How eligibility issues will be referred to UI adjudication staff.
- How assessments will be structured.
- How information will be shared among UI staff and other staff and how the work search plan and related activities will be documented.

**UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE
REEMPLOYMENT and ELIGIBILITY ASSESSMENTS
COVER SHEET**

State Name:	
Name and Title of Grant Notification Contact (<i>Usually the State Agency Administrator</i>): Name: _____ Title: _____	
REA Project Contact <i>The person who can answer questions about the REA proposal.</i>	Name:
	Telephone:
	E-mail:
Total REA Project Cost <i>The total amount of funds requested</i>	\$ _____
Total Service Delivery Staff Cost <i>The total amount of funds requested for staff to conduct the REAs excluding management costs</i>	\$ _____
Total Management Costs <i>The total amount of funds requested for administrative/management costs excluding cost of staff who will conduct the REAs</i>	\$ _____
Staff and Management Costs per REA <i>The sum of service delivery staff costs and management costs divided by the number of planned REAs</i>	\$ _____
Staff Training Costs <i>The total amount of funds requested for staff training to conduct REAs</i>	\$ _____
Projected Time for REA, including Paperwork <i>The total time spent preparing for and conducting the REA, recording results and other documentation</i>	
Total Number of REAs <i>The total number of REAs the state will schedule</i>	
Total Number of REA Sites <i>The total number of sites where REAs will be conducted. For levels in excess of 10,000 provide the number of sites at each level</i>	
Type of Staff Conducting REAs <i>Description of the staff that will conduct the REAs (e.g., UI, One-Stop, Contract, or a combination)</i>	

- Identify the feedback loop that will provide information to the UI program staff about the results of referrals to reemployment services.
- Describe any additional factors not covered in this list that will be a part of the project.
- Explain how REA services will be integrated with RES funds or other available funding for reemployment services.

c. Projected Performance Improvements (15 percent of total score):

The proposal must identify areas in which UI program performance is expected to improve as a result of the REA initiative. It should explain the proportion of claimants to be served in terms of the total UI beneficiary population. The proposal should describe which services are currently provided to the selected beneficiary population. If the state has conducted a study of unmet service needs of this population, the study's findings should be included. If the state can show that the projected assessments should lead to a reduction in UI overpayments, a reduction in the average benefit duration, or faster reemployment, such information should be included in the proposal's narrative. The proposal should also explain how expected performance improvements will be measured.

d. Estimated Time and Cost for Each Assessment (15 percent of total score):

The proposal must include an estimate of the time and the cost requirements for each REA. If appropriate, varying levels of service may be specified in conjunction with varying costs, e.g., beneficiaries who are determined to be "job ready" may cost less to serve. Sufficient information should be provided to illustrate how the state determined the projected staff costs and projected staff time for the various components of the assessment that were used to determine the maximum number of REAs that could be accomplished based upon the grant amount requested.

e. Project Timeline (10 percent of total score):

A timeline of the project must be included that identifies significant milestones in implementing the initiative, including project design, and any staff training. Programming requirements that may be necessary to select and track participating beneficiaries or to measure outcomes related to program improvements should be included in the timeline, completion of the ETA 9128 and the ETA 9129, and the date that the first REAs will be offered. Funding will be based upon the timeline provided by the state.

f. Supporting Materials:

States may attach additional materials that will support the proposal.