| TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT NOTICE | NO. 03-24 |
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| | DATE August 9, 2024 |

**TO:**       STATE WORKFORCE AGENCIES

**FROM:**     JOSÉ JAVIER RODRÍGUEZ /s/
              Assistant Secretary

**SUBJECT:**  Announcing the Availability of Real-Time Services in Production for the Modernized Unemployment Insurance (UI) Interstate Connection Network (ICON)

1. **Purpose.** To inform states that connect to the ICON system for real-time services that direct connection to the ICON Cloud Hub is now available and recommended. States are encouraged to transition to one of two potential direct connection options which are 1) Connecting via Simple Object Access Protocol (SOAP)/Web Services and 2) Connecting via packaged code (ICONnect).

2. **Action Requested.** The Employment and Training Administration (ETA) requests State Administrators to provide the information in this Training and Employment Notice (TEN) to appropriate program staff, and requests states to integrate the changes described in this guidance into operation by *February 28, 2025*.

3. **Summary and Background.**

   a. Summary – This TEN provides state unemployment insurance (UI) agencies information regarding implementation of the Modernized ICON Cloud Hub for real-time services. The following four real-time services are now available in the ICON Cloud Hub:
      - State Identification Inquiry (SID)
      - Interstate Benefit Inquiry (IBIQ)
      - Withdrawn/Invalid Claims (WIC2)
      - Unemployment Insurance Query (UIQ)

   b. Background – Implemented in 1982, ICON is a vital UI technology system that aids states in processing interstate benefits (IB) claims, Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) claims, and Unemployment Compensation for Ex-servicemembers (UCX) claims. As mentioned in TEN No. 04-22, ETA provided funding to the National Association of State Workforce Agencies' (NASWA) Center for Employment Security Education and Research (CESER) to modernize the ICON system. In April 2022, NASWA/CESER contracted with a vendor to support modernization of the ICON system. During the first phase of this project, the vendor focused on ICON's real time applications: UIQ, SID, WIC2, and IBIQ. This phase is now complete and direct connection as well as packaged code (ICONnect) for these real-time applications are available for states to implement and use.

4.  **Real-Time Connections Available.** ETA recommends that states move to a direct connection to the ICON Cloud Hub no later than *February 28, 2025,* to take full advantage of the updated real-time applications. States that fail to update the endpoint by the stated date may lose support for real-time applications through the legacy connection.

    a.  **Options.** States have two options to establish a direct connection to the ICON Cloud Hub.

        -   **Direct Connect** – States connecting via SOAP or Webservices can directly connect to the cloud hub for real-time applications using their current interface with no code changes beyond updating their existing destination endpoint to one provided by the ICON Cloud Hub. SOAP and Web Services states are encouraged to implement at least this first option.

        -   **Connecting via Packaged Code (ICONnect)** – The packaged code replaces the complicated connection and serialization processes currently implemented by each individual state in favor of a simple, object-based Representational State Transfer (REST) implementation that allows states to focus on their data instead of on the connection. To update and use the packaged code, states will be required to make some code changes. The advantage for states is that this code change will provide a simple upgrade path in the future as new programs, such as real-time IB messages, are added. The packaged code is available in both Java and .NET implementations.

    b.  **Benefits.** By connecting directly, the state agency benefits from a simplified connection to the ICON Cloud Hub, faster processing time, and more streamlined support. States can expect simultaneous responses, support of Java and .NET, and a simple upgrade path. States using the packaged code to connect to the ICON Cloud Hub will experience features such as a combined SID/IBIQ inquiry, better data validation, and synchronous requests.

    c.  **Estimated Time to Complete.** The NASWA ICON Team estimates that states will need approximately three to eight hours of programming time to implement the direct connection to the ICON Cloud Hub via an endpoint change. States connecting via the packaged code should anticipate approximately four to six weeks of programming time.

    d.  **Available Resources.** Technical assistance, tools, and resources are available through the NASWA ICON webpage at https://www.naswa.org/icon. Additionally, states may contact the NASWA ICON team directly at icon@naswa.org, or modernization vendor at support@uips.com.

5.  **Inquiries.** Please direct inquiries to the appropriate ETA Regional Office.

6.  **References.**
    -   Training and Employment Notice (TEN) No. 04-22, *Interstate Connection Network (ICON) Interstate Benefit Inquiry (IBIQ) schema change for states connecting via*

*web services*, issued August 12, 2022,
https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/advisories/ten-no-04-22;

- TEN No. 36-08, *Plans to Upgrade the Unemployment Insurance Interstate Connections Network (UI-ICON)*, issued March 23, 2009,
https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/advisories/training-and-employment-notice-no-36-08;
- Handbook for Interstate Claimstaking, ET Handbook No. 392, Appendix A,
https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/advisories/handbooks/et-handbook-no-392 issued August 31, 2005.

7. **Attachment(s).** None.