

EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ADMINISTRATION ADVISORY SYSTEM U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR Washington, D.C. 20210	CLASSIFICATION Unemployment Insurance
	CORRESPONDENCE SYMBOL OUI
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ADVISORY: UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE PROGRAM LETTER NO. 17-12

TO: STATE WORKFORCE AGENCIES

FROM: JANE OATES
Assistant Secretary *Jane Oates*

SUBJECT: Unemployment Insurance (UI) State Information Data Exchange System (SIDES) Messaging and Communications Toolkit Availability

1. **Purpose.** To provide information on the availability of a UI SIDES Messaging and Communications Toolkit (Toolkit) containing products and tools designed for use by state UI agencies to communicate with employers and third-party administrators (TPAs) about the offerings and benefits of SIDES and SIDES E-Response.
2. **References.**
 - Improper Payment Information Act of 2002 (IPIA; P.L. No. 107-300, 31 U.S.C. 3321 note);
 - Improper Payment Elimination and Recovery Act of 2010 (IPERA; P.L. No. 111-204, 31 U.S.C. 3301 note);
 - Executive Order (E.O.) 13520, *Reducing Improper Payments* (November 20, 2009);
 - Unemployment Insurance Program Letter (UIPL) No. 19-11, *National Effort to Reduce Improper Payments in the Unemployment Insurance (UI) Program*; and
 - UIPL No. 26-11, *Unemployment Insurance (UI) Supplemental Funding Opportunity for Program Integrity and Performance and System Improvements*.
3. **Background.** On November 20, 2009, President Obama signed E.O. 13520, *Reducing Improper Payments*. It emphasized the need to eliminate waste, fraud, and abuse in federally administered programs while protecting access to these programs by their intended beneficiaries. Subsequently, the IPIA, as amended by IPERA, required Federal agencies to review their programs and program activities annually, identify programs and areas that may be susceptible to significant overpayments, and develop and implement corrective action plans for any "high-risk" programs. The UI program is a "high-risk" program. Under IPERA, an agency which reports an improper payment rate of 10 percent or higher for a program it administers will be determined to be out of compliance and will trigger oversight by Congress, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and the Office of the Inspector General.

On June 10, 2011, the Department of Labor (Department) issued UIPL No. 19-11, *National Effort to Reduce Improper Payments in the UI Program*, to notify stakeholders that UI

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integrity is a top priority and provide a strategic plan to reduce the rate of UI improper payments. One strategy the UIPL indicated the Department would undertake as part of this plan was the development of outreach and marketing tools for states to use with businesses and TPAs to promote their participation in SIDES.

In UIPL No. 26-11, the Department also announced a supplemental funding opportunity to help states develop their own state-specific strategies to reduce the improper payment rate. As a condition of eligibility, that funding opportunity required states to implement a messaging campaign targeted at UI claimants and employers, including specific messaging to improve employers' awareness of their responsibility to respond to state requests for separation information and/or earnings/wage verifications. The UIPL indicated that sample materials for this messaging campaign and recommended uses would be provided by the Department.

4. **Toolkit Resources.** Created through a grant from the Department to the Information Technology Support Center (ITSC), the Toolkit serves as a resource to state unemployment agencies to support their employer outreach campaign with information and resources about the offerings and benefits of SIDES. The nine message products included in the Toolkit may be used as provided or customized by states to ensure consistency with established programs, styles and procedures. The Toolkit also provides state agencies with specific recommendations to augment their existing employer communication strategies, recognizing that differences exist between state processes, terminology, and regulations.

Resources in the Toolkit include:

- Message products state agencies may customize as necessary, such as fact sheets, frequently asked questions, and newsletter content.
- Examples of employer outreach strategies to raise awareness and understanding among employers and TPAs about the benefits of SIDES and SIDES E-Response, such as enlisting program "ambassadors," establishing calendar milestones, and targeting state-specific industries and employers.
- Suggested messages to be displayed on state Web sites.
- Sample text for social media messages for Facebook and Twitter accounts.
- Customizable PowerPoint presentation on SIDES for use in meetings with business associations or other employer representative groups.

The Toolkit is posted to the members-only section of the ITSC Web site (www.itsc.org), the UI SIDES Web site (info.uisides.org), the UI Community of Practice (ui.workforce3one.org), and the UI Payment Integrity home page (www.oui.doleta.gov/unemploy/improp_pay.asp).

5. **Action Requested.** State administrators are requested to:
- a) Distribute this information throughout the UI community and to interested stakeholders; and
 - b) Within the context of the state's strategic plan to address UI improper payments, identify strategies to use and adapt resources from this toolkit as part of the state's employer messaging campaign.
6. **Inquiries.** Questions should be directed to the appropriate Regional Office.