

**Additional Information and Resources to Rebuild and Improve Program Performance
and
Develop High Quality Customer Service and Experiences,
including Implementing ARPA-funded Projects**

The unprecedented claims workload during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted states' capacity to administer and operate their UI programs. Many states continue to struggle with administrative and operational challenges resulting in performance and customer service issues in the aftermath of the pandemic and its longer-term impact on the UI program. These challenges include but are not limited to: changes in state program leadership; aging technology systems and/or implementing new technology solutions; managing the loss of key subject matter expertise due to staff retirements and turnover; hiring new staff, requiring ongoing staff training and increased supervision; loss of contracted staff support; combatting an increase in fraud activities; and the need to improve overall program performance.

Using funding made available under ARPA, the U.S. Department of Labor (Department) has awarded about \$783 million in grants to states to support UI modernization. These grants include funding to implement state-specific recommendations produced by engagements from the Department's "Tiger Teams" (multi-disciplinary teams of experts established by the Department to analyze state UI systems and process challenges) engagements; to pursue projects to enhance equitable access to the UI program; and to support program integrity activities.

While significant progress has been made across the nation in improving timeliness of benefit payments, states continue to struggle to meet the acceptable level of performance for timeliness in first payments, adjudication and appeals. In preparation of the FY 2025 SQSP, states should examine strategies and processes with the goal of quickly reducing the level of backlogs. States are encouraged to leverage resources on the use of plain language (<https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/ui-modernization/use-plain-language>) and behavioral insights (See [TEN 15-21](#)) to improve service delivery in the UI program. As part of the FY 2025 SQSP process, states must, in the State Plan Narrative, describe their plans to address any pending adjudication and appeals backlogs and to improve timely delivery of benefits. If a state has an ARPA -funded grant that will impact processes to improve timeliness, the state is encouraged to include the strategy(ies) it is pursuing using these grant funds in their FY 2025 SQSPs.

In developing their FY 2025 SQSPs, states are strongly encouraged to incorporate administrative performance improvement strategies such as:

- Projects funded through ARPA grants to improve equitable access to the UI program as detailed in UIPL No. [23-21](#) and leverage the strategies states are pursuing through the ARPA-funded grants to support implementation of state-specific Tiger Team recommendations (as detailed in UIPLs No. [02-22](#) and [02-22, Change 2](#) and [11-23](#)).
- Conducting business process analyses in key areas to identify opportunities and recommendations for improving program operations, integrity, and performance, and implementing the recommendations.

- Reviewing service delivery processes to ensure that current web-based, telephone-based, and other remote UI services provide and promote alternative mechanisms for individuals experiencing barriers to access, such as a disability or limited English proficiency (*see* UIPLs No. [01-24](#), [02-16](#) and [02-16, Change 1](#)).
- Reviewing staff training strategies to support succession planning and ongoing staff development; and using online training modules available through the National Association of State Workforce Agencies' (NASWA's) learning management platform at <https://www.naswa.org/learning>.
- Incorporating lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic, including the significant increase in UC claims and implementation of the temporary Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act UI programs, such as managing rapid changes in staffing, implementing call center expansions, and innovations to manage customer flow, and technology solutions to increase capacity and detect and prevent fraud and other improper payments.
- Using technical assistance opportunities offered by ETA, the Department's Office of Unemployment Insurance Modernization (OUIM), the Department's Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO), UI Information Technology Support Center (ITSC), and the UI Integrity Center, as well as the many resources available through the UI Community of Practice (CoP) on WorkforceGPS at <https://www.workforcegps.org/>. Also, states are encouraged to review information and resources available on the Department's UI Modernization resource page at <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/ui-modernization>.