

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT DIVISION
Workforce Programs
Technical Assistance Bulletin 291

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Subject: Serving Unemployment Benefits Claimants

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This Technical Assistance (TA) Bulletin provides Local Workforce Development Boards (Boards) with information on serving unemployment benefits claimants, expanding on information provided in the [Employment Service \(ES\) Guide](#), which contains comprehensive ES policy information.¹ It also removes outdated information related to the Rapid Reemployment Services (RRES) program and rescinds TA Bulletin 196, Change 1.

This TA Bulletin outlines tools available to Boards for the provision of services to claimants. Claimants are a priority population for the receipt of workforce services and assistance in becoming reemployed. The Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) is interested in ensuring that Boards are treating claimants as a priority population and are providing staff-assisted individualized career services to help claimants with their reemployment efforts.

It is important for Boards to outreach and serve as many claimants as possible based on available staff resources. While ES staff is the primary provider of services to claimants, other Workforce Solutions Office staff members also can serve claimants.

Getting Claimants Back to Work

TWC strongly encourages Boards to design services that provide early intervention with claimants. Equally important is the provision of continued comprehensive services for claimants throughout the life of their claim cycle or until they return to work. TWC encourages Boards to dedicate staff to claimants and to establish claimant protocols that include continued one-on-one reemployment services.

The longer that individuals draw unemployment benefits, the more likely they are to exhaust them. Thus, it is important that the key points within the unemployment benefits claim cycle are reflected in Boards' service delivery strategies.

Examples include the following:

- At the time of filing for benefits, a claimant must seek—and accept, if offered—a job that pays at least 90 percent of the claimant's previous wage. Beginning with the eighth week of unemployment, claimants must seek and accept jobs paying 75 percent of their previous wage.

¹ <https://twc.texas.gov/files/jobseekers/employment-service-guide-twc.pdf>

- Claimants on the initial claims list who have not responded to a welcome letter by week three, a time when claimants are typically contacted to attend orientation, can be notified by letter or by messaging through their WorkInTexas.com account to attend a skills assessment, job readiness training, or a résumé-building workshop.
- At week five, three weeks before they must accept a job at 75 percent of their previous wage, it is important that services be increased accordingly.

Encouraging Claimants' Use of Services

Although claimants may receive a letter inviting them to make use of workforce services, some claimants will never take advantage of those services. The goal is to ensure that claimants have the opportunity to participate in Workforce Solutions Office services that will enhance their chances of obtaining employment and higher wages.

Assistance that can be provided to claimants includes:

- contacting claimants very early in the claim cycle;
- sustaining contact with the claimant throughout the claim cycle—TWC strongly encourages Boards to dedicate necessary resources to provide sustained contact with claimants to assist them with their reemployment efforts;
- reinforcing the requirement that claimants must actively seek work to continue receiving unemployment benefits;
- encouraging claimants to use tools available to them in WorkInTexas.com, such as the WIT Employment Plan;
- reviewing and updating claimants' WorkInTexas.com registrations to ensure the best possible opportunity for matches to job postings;
- teaching claimants how to search WorkInTexas.com for job postings;
- encouraging claimants to register with and search for jobs using other job banks, if they have limited matches in WorkInTexas.com;
- reviewing claimants' résumés and suggesting improvements;
- advising claimants of available workshops on résumé writing and interview preparation;
- periodically running job searches for claimants in WorkInTexas.com, and, if appropriate matches are identified, contacting the claimants to offer them a job referral. (A search can be run regardless of whether the claimant is present, but the claimant must accept the job referral before an application is completed in WorkInTexas.com.);
- determining whether additional services, such as Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) services, are necessary to assist the claimant in returning to work; and
- enrolling claimants in WIOA dislocated worker services when appropriate.

Additional Strategies for Serving Claimants

It is important to consider more highly targeted strategies for serving claimants, such as:

- establishing job clubs for claimants to help them with improving their résumés and interview skills, searching for job opportunities, and scheduling job interviews;
- comparing the local workforce development area's (workforce area) claimant population to available job postings in the workforce area, particularly in WorkInTexas.com. When there is an inadequate number of job postings in an occupation for the number of claimants, it is

important for the Business Services Unit to contact employers and engage in job development;

- using a job developer to assist in locating potential jobs for individual claimants for whom no opening is listed in WorkInTexas.com; and
- using WIOA dislocated worker funds, offer support services to eligible claimants that allow them to participate in programs with authorized activities (that is, basic and individualized career services and training services). WIOA dislocated worker support services include, but are not limited to:
 - transportation (including vouchers for gasoline);
 - assistance with child care; and
 - tools, uniforms, and supplies required for a new job.

WIOA dislocated worker funds can be used to provide services only if a claimant has been determined eligible.

Issues Associated with Serving Claimants

If a claimant is outreached about a specific job and fails to respond, the claimant may be subject to a delay or denial of unemployment benefits. The majority of potential unemployment-benefits ineligibility issues are referred to TWC's Unemployment Insurance & Regulation adjudication staff through WorkInTexas.com.

Workforce Solutions Office staff interacts with claimants regularly and often becomes aware of issues not covered through the WorkInTexas.com interface that affect a claimant's continued eligibility for benefits. Other potential unemployment-benefits eligibility issues that are discovered during interactions with claimants and that are not reported by WorkInTexas.com must be reported to the local Workforce/Unemployment Insurance (WFUI) coordinator for investigation using the Potential Unemployment Benefits Eligibility Issue Form—[WF-42 form](#).

Workforce Solutions Office staff password-protects the WF-42 form before sending it to the local WFUI coordinator. The local WFUI coordinator sends the password-protected WF-42 form to the state WFUI coordinator for investigation by sending an e-mail to wfui.coordinator@twc.state.tx.us. Examples of potential unemployment-benefits eligibility issues include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Claimant is not able to work or is not available for work.
- Claimant returns to full-time employment and still receives unemployment benefits.
- Claimant does not report or underreports earnings.

Send inquiries regarding this TA Bulletin to wfpolicy.clarifications@twc.state.tx.us.

RESCISSIONS:

TA Bulletin 196, Change 1