



Retooling Washington Work Group 1

*Coordinated Outreach to
Unemployment Insurance (UI) Exhaustees*

18-month report

October 2010 - June 2012

Table of Contents

Executive summary	3
Members	4
Deliverables	5
• <i>Data</i>	5
• <i>Resource referral information for exhaustees¹</i>	9
• <i>Resource referral toolkits for service providers</i>	12
Action plan and milestones	14
Appendices	17

¹ Former deliverables two (Exhaustee Outreach Plan) and three (Resource Referrals for Exhaustees) have been combined.

Executive summary

Washington State continues to face the most difficult economic time since the Great Depression. At the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board Retooling Washington's Future meeting on October 5, 2010, participants discussed ideas about how Washington's workforce system can make a difference in the near term. While many agencies were already providing services to this specific population of exhaustees, it became evident that coordinating efforts would be beneficial and provide valuable information.

The directive for Work Group 1 is "coordinated outreach to UI exhaustees, including demographic breakdown of who is in the pool, some market analysis of skills available and work history, development of service tool chest and identification of service points for referral. Also includes development of the actual outreach strategy (collateral materials, single website, etc.)."

To effectively coordinate outreach activities to the growing population of those exhausting all unemployment insurance (UI) benefits, Work Group 1 has met regularly since its inception in the fall of 2010.

This 18-month report details the accomplishments of Work Group 1 and provides a clear plan for the next steps in each of the three key deliverables:

- 1) Data;
- 2) Exhaustee Outreach Plan/Resource referral information for exhaustees; and
- 3) Resource referral toolkits for service providers.

For questions or additional information, please contact workgroup lead Amy Leneker with the Employment Security Department at (360) 902-9314 or aleneker@esd.wa.gov.

Report authored by Alison Grazzini Smith with the Employment Security Department.

Members

Members of Work Group 1 are comprised of staff from multiple organizations that provide a diverse collection of services to exhaustees.

Organizations below are listed in alphabetical order:

- Department of Commerce (COM)
- Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS)
- Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA)
- Employment Security Department (ESD)
- Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB)
- State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC)
- WA Workforce Association (WWA)
- WorkForce Central
- Workforce Development Council of Snohomish County (WDCSC)
- Workforce Development Council of Spokane
- Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (Workforce Board)

Deliverable #1: data

To help inform outreach efforts and service delivery statewide, the Employment Security Department (ESD) publishes regular updated exhaustee data reports.

Collection and publishing

Unemployment Insurance (UI) data staff within ESD continues to run a report at the end of each calendar month to collect relevant exhaustee data. After collection, this information is analyzed and published on the Workforce Board Retooling WA Work Group 1 website: <http://www.wtb.wa.gov/UIExhaustreports.asp>.

As of June 20, 2012, there are 99,150 exhaustees.

Demographics

The data collected from this report provides demographic information including:

- age;
- education;
- gender;
- occupation;
- industry;
- veterans status; and
- disability status.

Exhaustee UI benefit information is provided statewide, by county, by legislative and congressional districts.

Stakeholders

ESD shares updated exhaustee data with a variety of internal and external stakeholders:

- Workforce, Training and Education Coordinating Board (Workforce Board);
- Workforce Development Council Executive Directors;
- Employment Security Department Area Directors;
- Agency partners;
- Key elected officials; and
- Work Group 1 members.

Demographic trends

ESD staff first examined exhaustee demographic information in November 2010 to identify trends for outreach purposes. Staff compared the general demographics of Washington's employed labor force in calendar 2010 to characteristics of claimants who had exhausted all UI benefits as of November 10, 2011. Results show that the demographic trend of exhaustees continues to follow that of the overall demographics of UI claimants, in that:

- There is a greater percentage of exhaustees age 45 and older;
- The least educated workers are exhausting at a higher rate;
- Males continue to exhaust benefits out of proportion to their labor force participation;

- African Americans are 7.5 percent of exhaustees but only 2.5 percent of the labor force;
- Workers in the construction and manufacturing industries exhaust benefits far out of proportion to their employment levels; and
- Workers from construction and management occupations exhaust benefits at nearly triple the rate of their respective shares of the workforce.

Pace of exhaustions

The pace of exhaustions has varied over time. Major increases appeared in March 2010 when the earliest group of exhaustees ran out of UI benefits and in November 2010 when corrected calculations of benefits resulted in a second large group of additional exhaustions.

September and October 2011 saw the largest monthly totals in nearly a year, with over 4,000 exhaustions in each of those months. In April 2012, exhaustions dramatically increased with the simultaneous expiration of the federally-funded extended benefits (EB) program and the phase out of tier 4 of the federally-funded Emergency Unemployment Compensation (EUC) program. Exhaustions totaled more than 12,000 for the month of April 2012 with nearly 7,200 in May.

Wage data analysis

ESD continues to analyze and review exhaustee wage data. This analysis reinforces findings in the 2011 ESD-published exhaustee survey². For example,

- The number of exhaustees who have found employment remains low. Current data³ shows that 26 percent or roughly 25,000 exhaustees have returned to work.
- Exhaustees who have found employment are earning significantly less than before they filed a UI claim. Although wages for exhaustees improve over time, they are still significantly lower than when they were employed previously. Data trends continue to show that wage levels for exhaustees who have found a job are at their lowest during the first quarter in which they are employed (or reemployed). Although wage levels improve over time, exhaustees are still earning an average of 41 percent less over a year after finding a job. Current data shows:
 - 1 quarter post-exhaustion: exhaustees earn approximately 56 percent less than the quarterly wage prior to the quarter of exhaustion
 - 2 quarters post-exhaustion: 50 percent less
 - 3 quarters post-exhaustion: 45 percent less
 - 4 quarters post-exhaustion: 41 percent less
 - 5 quarters post-exhaustion: 41 percent less

Recent UI benefit changes

- In February of this year, Congress extended Emergency Unemployment Compensation (EUC) and extended benefits (EB) programs through December 29, 2012. There are three significant provisions that impact Washington State:

² ESD LMEA [Exhaustee Survey](#), April 2012

³ Employment Security Department, UI Data, May 2012

1. **Weeks of benefits are phasing out.** As the unemployment rate declines, weeks of benefits are beginning to phase out. Washington State's maximum weeks of benefits have declined from 99 to 73 weeks and in September, ESD projects the maximum weeks of benefits will likely drop to 63 weeks.
 - On April 21, 2012, Washington State "triggered off" of tier 4 of Emergency Unemployment Compensation (EUC). Over 268,000 letters were mailed to affected claimants explaining the change in their benefit entitlement.
 - In addition, the call volume at the EUC claims center increased dramatically from 1,600 calls per week to over 4,000 the week of April 21, 2012.
2. **Reemployment services to the long-term unemployed.** Additional requirements are placed on claimants receiving EUC benefits:
 - Claimants receiving EUC benefits for the first time and those that have moved from EUC tier 1 to tier 2, must be called into WorkSource to assess and receive services. This includes skills assessment, job referrals, labor market information, one-stop service orientation and a review of eligibility in their job-search efforts.
 - To date, nearly 12,000 people have attended the EUC orientation at 32 WorkSource locations throughout the state.
3. **Shared Work.** The Shared Work program helps employers from laying-off employees when times are tough. Under new federal law, this program is completely federally funded and Washington State is eligible to apply for federal funds to expand the state program.

- ESD Communications released a press release on April 3, 2012 detailing the changes in UI benefits: <http://www.esd.wa.gov/newsandinformation/releases/warehouse-twenty-six-week-unemployment-benefits-12-014.php>.

Comparative research

Other states

- ESD policy staff researched other states' programs at targeting specific services to the long-term unemployed and exhaustees. While the results were limited, there are three states that have taken an innovative approach to assisting this targeted group of customers:
 - **Pennsylvania's** Department of Public Welfare and Department of Labor and Industry partnered together with a third-party administrator to match exhaustees with food assistance benefits. Data is shared monthly between these two agencies and the third-party assists with customer intake and outreach activities. To date, approximately 56 percent of exhaustees have been enrolled in the food assistance program.
 - **Oregon's** WorkSource staff personally call all claimants who are within a month of exhausting UI benefits. Staff invites these individuals to come into the WorkSource office where reemployment services and referrals to local community organizations are provided.

- **Connecticut** administers two programs to help exhaustees return to work:
 - *The STEP UP Wage Reimbursement program* began in February 2012 and provides a six-month wage subsidy to small businesses hiring exhaustees (who are automatically eligible) and others meeting the requirements.
 - *The Platform to Employment (P2E) pilot program* began in September 2011 and helps exhaustees reconnect with the workforce through a combination of career skills classes and ultimately, places them with an employer for 8 weeks of work experience.

Congressional report

- Washington's Retooling effort was described in a recent report published by the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO)⁴ detailing efforts to assist exhaustees and other statewide assistance programs. Work Group 1 members also reviewed the report to look for best practices and innovative ways to serve the long-term unemployed. Released in February 2012, this report found that:
 - 15 million people lost jobs between 2007 – 2009;
 - About 7.5 million received UI benefits;
 - 18 percent received some type of Social Security benefit;
 - 15 percent received benefits from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (food stamps); and
 - Less than 3 percent received Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) benefits – most did not qualify because they did not have children 18 years or younger.

Accomplishments to date

Reports

- ESD continues to provide updated monthly data reports statewide, by county, by legislative district and congressional district. This information is posted on the Work Group 1 website: http://www.wtb.wa.gov/Retool_UIExhaust.asp.
- Work Group 1 has partnered with the Workforce Board to identify the number of exhaustee data web hits: nearly 3,000 since the site was created in February 2011.

Indicator dashboard

- In June 2011, the Workforce Board approved the indicator dashboard for Work Group 1⁵. Workgroup members continue to revise the dashboard with new and relevant measures that are used to manage this effort.
- The dashboard is updated monthly and findings are discussed during regular workgroup meetings.

Next steps

- ESD will continue to implement federal changes to UI benefit laws. Exhaustee wage and demographic data will continue to be gathered and published on an

⁴ U.S. GAO, *Economic Circumstances of Individuals Who Exhausted Benefits*, 2012

⁵ See [Appendix A](#)

ongoing basis to help inform service providers as outreach activities are being conducted.

- Workgroup members will continue to discuss data trends and brainstorm creative ways to coordinate outreach efforts to customers across the state.

Deliverable #2: resource referral information for exhaustees

Outreach goals and strategies continue to be developed in collaboration with local partners, as well as identifying and providing resource referral information to the growing population of exhaustees.

Accomplishments to date

Website updates

In early June, ESD updated Go2WorkSource.com so job seekers who post their résumés can check a box indicating that they are military veterans – and employers who want to hire veterans can search for job seekers who have checked this box. Washington State is the first in the nation to offer this feature to help connect veterans with employers.

Communication to claimants and stakeholders

- On January 10, 2012 (and previously in 2011), ESD Commissioner Paul Trause testified before the legislature on a variety of topics, including services to exhaustees and the efforts of the Retooling initiative.
- ESD staff continues to respond to stakeholders requesting information on the exhaustees and services provided to this population.
- The Chair of the Workforce Board sent a letter to state and federal legislators regarding Retooling that included a brief description of efforts thus far and updated exhaustee data for both legislative and congressional districts statewide.

Auto-dialer messages

Statewide

- New exhaustees are receiving the statewide communication message via the auto-dialer system each month. These messages will run through the end of the year and includes WorkSource-service information targeting exhaustees.
- Nearly 15 percent (12,000)⁶ of exhaustees who received a message have come into a WorkSource office for some type of service.
- ESD Communications released a press release on May 10, 2011 detailing the auto-dialer rollout, located on the Work Group 1 website: http://www.wtb.wa.gov/Retool_UIExhaust.asp.

Local

- A select few WDAs have piloted the auto-dialer targeting the long-term unemployed. For example,

⁶ ESD UI Data, January – March 2012

- The Northwest WDA sends regular auto-dialer messages to new and long-term UI claimants. This has resulted in a 12-percent increase in those individuals coming into WorkSource offices for services.
- Other WDAs have used the auto-dialer to promote available job opportunities to the long-term unemployed in their local communities.

Ongoing local efforts

Due to the unique needs of each local area and the varying availability of local resources, each WDA has flexibility to meet the diverse needs of their customers. Many WDAs continue developing strategic local plans and implementing new, focused strategies to serve customers.

As of June 1, 2012, all twelve WDAs have updated their strategies to serve exhaustees and the long-term unemployed⁷. This information is available on the Work Group 1 website: http://www.wtb.wa.gov/Retool_UIExhaust.asp.

- **Re-employment services.** Several WDAs offer a variety of reemployment services and programs to assist job seekers. This includes individual assessments to identify transferrable skills, resume development, interview preparation and other ways to effectively market unique skills to employers. For example,
 - **WorkSource on Wheels** – Through a unique and innovative partnership, the Tacoma-Pierce WDA along with the Pierce County and Puyallup Libraries, are leveraging local resources to provide re-employment services to job seekers in the rural areas of Pierce County. This partnership has resulted in an ongoing schedule of workshops being presented in Orting, Roy, Buckley, Eatonville and Key Peninsula.
 - **Hire U Job Club** – The Spokane WDA launched a new opportunity that allows job seekers and employment specialists to network, build camaraderie, brainstorm, develop job leads and gain job search advice, encouragement and support. These 8-week job clubs, enable job seekers to build confidence in who they are and what they offer to employers. Initial data is showing that Hire U Job Club participants are finding employment quicker than those not participating, especially for those who have been unemployed for longer period of time.
- **Targeted workshops** that focus on the realities of today's economy and the changing needs of the exhaustee and long-term unemployed populations have been developed and are currently in use across the state. For example,
 - **Putting Your Skills to Work** – The Snohomish WDA offers a workshop for job seekers to uncover and identify skills gained through job(s) and life experiences and learn how to successfully sell those skills and showcase themselves effectively in today's job market.
 - **Older Worker Workshop** – The Southwest WDA offers a workshop to help long-term unemployed job seekers 53 and older who may face

⁷ See [Appendix B](#)

additional barriers to finding work such as age discrimination and lack of updated skills. These topics and more are covered in this targeted workshop.

Microsoft eLearning

- ESD has extended its contract with Microsoft to offer free online training through October 2012. Microsoft eLearning continues to help WorkSource customers build computer skills and become more competitive in the job market.
- To help market eLearning, ESD is using the statewide auto-dialer system that leaves a pre-recorded message for claimants during week 10 and week 16 in their UI claim.
- Since September 2010, over 18,000 Washington residents have started more than 45,000 Microsoft courses and completed at least 19,000.

Resource Guide

- 2-1-1 has replaced the Resource Guide in WorkSource offices across the state, on ESD's website, and in the script used by staff in ESD's Claim Centers.
- With growing concern over state budget reductions and the elimination or significant reduction of resources, the Resource Guide was phased out. (In December 2010, Work Group 1 developed this Guide to assist individuals who were about to exhaust all UI benefits. It included a list of statewide resources that could be of assistance to claimants and their families. The Guide was mailed to over 230,000 claimants, emailed to over 5,000 and was handed out in WorkSource offices statewide.)

Next steps

- ESD will continue to release the statewide auto-dialer message to inform exhaustees of services available in WorkSource; as well as to UI claimants to inform them of free training opportunities through Microsoft eLearning.
- Work Group 1 will continue to identify effective mechanisms to capture local activities and share information about those activities at local, state and federal levels.

Deliverable #3: resource referral toolkits for service providers

Work Group 1 continues to share information with frontline staff in WorkSource offices statewide that are directly working with claimants who are exhausting or have exhausted all UI benefits. Equally important is how the statewide workgroup can support local frontline providers themselves in a variety of ways.

Accomplishments to date

Service referrals

DSHS-DVR online referral

- The new online referral resource launched on April 30, 2012. This was a partnership between the Department of Social and Health Services, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DSHS-DVR) and ESD to improve the referral process from WorkSource to DVR with little to no impact on customers.

- This new assessment tool can be completed in three easy steps and connects potential DVR customers with the nearest DVR office in their neighborhood.
- Anecdotally, feedback from frontline staff has been very positive; DVR will continue to monitor effectiveness and communicate findings during workgroup meetings.
- A link to the assessment tool can be found on the [DVR website](#) or on ESD's [Go2WorkSource.com](#) website.

DSHS mobile community service office

- DSHS and ESD have shared contact information to coordinate services for upcoming events targeting the long-term unemployed and exhaustees. The DSHS Basic Food Program deploys mobile community service offices (CSOs) to help people apply and if eligible, grant an electronic food benefits card that can be used immediately.
- In April, ESD furnished DSHS with projected exhaustee data (by county) to help determine deployment locations for upcoming mobile CSO visits.
- Workgroup members will continue to identify and discuss upcoming events where mobile service delivery can be promoted and utilized.

Training partnership

- Last year, DSHS-DVR offered unspent federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds for ESD to provide motivational interviewing training to nearly 300 frontline and partner staff in 7 WorkSource locations⁸ statewide. Training began on May 31, 2011 and concluded on December 1, 2011.
- Training participant feedback was very positive. Over 90 percent of participants felt the training improved their job skills and over 95 percent felt that the information learned would have a positive effect on their interaction with customers in the future.
- Motivational interviewing training is geared towards helping staff engage more effectively with customers, increase successful outcomes and decrease frustration.

Staff training

ESD-offered training

- ESD is currently developing a variety of online trainings for frontline and partner staff to better serve long-term unemployed customers.
- With the recent federal law changes that have impacted the availability of UI benefits, specific EUC training was offered to frontline staff as well as the development of process aids and two webinars.
- Over the past year, ESD has made a strategic shift from in-person training to online alternatives. This has allowed greater flexibility in staff attendance while balancing the diverse needs of customer demands in local communities.
- ESD currently offers more than 140 process aids and delivered more than 160 Quick Guides to help frontline and partner staff effectively assist customers.

⁸ Trainings were offered in Spokane, Lakewood, Moses Lake, Vancouver, Lynnwood, Auburn and North Seattle.

Training partnership

- DSHS-DVR communicated the changes in UI benefits and new requirements for reemployment services to their field offices statewide. DVR was added to ESD's EUC orientation session to ensure frontline and partner staff were properly trained on assisting customers with disabilities as well as procedures to refer WorkSource customers to DVR services.

Next steps

- Future training partnership opportunities with other state agencies and local partners will be discussed and developed during workgroup meetings.
- ESD will continue to develop staff trainings for frontline and partner staff with updates communicated in workgroup and Workforce Board meetings.

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Action plan and milestones⁹

Deliverable 1: data

Milestone	Anticipated Due Date	Completion Date
Provide updated exhaustee data statewide, by county, legislative and congressional districts; share with legislators and congressional members; post to Work Group 1 website. ESD is now publishing legislative and congressional district data using the new redistricting boundaries.	June 28, 2012	June 28, 2012
Continue to update Work Group 1 dashboard; provide update to Workforce Board.	June 28, 2012	June 28, 2012
Conduct data trend analysis of exhaustee data demographics.	June 15, 2012	June 15, 2012
Conduct wage analysis of exhaustee population.	June 15, 2012	June 15, 2012
Testify before the Legislature on recent federal UI extensions.	January 10, 2012	January 10, 2012
Monitor congressional activity on future UI extensions; provide updates to workgroup members and Workforce Board.	Ongoing	Ongoing

Deliverable 2: resource referral information for exhaustees

Milestone	Anticipated Due Date	Completion Date
Develop an HR 3630 communications plan.	March 31, 2012	March 31, 2012
Phase-out Resource Guide and promote 2-1-1 in future mailings, website and WorkSource offices.	March 2012	March 9, 2012
Update local Workforce Development Area (WDA) briefers to share strategies in assisting exhaustees.	June 1, 2012	June 1, 2012
Continue to release statewide auto-dialer messages promoting Microsoft eLearning to UI claimants.	October 31, 2012	October 31, 2012
Continue to release statewide and local auto-dialer messages promoting WorkSource services to exhaustees; provide status updates to workgroup.	December 31, 2012	December 31, 2012

Deliverable 3: resource referral toolkits for service providers

Milestone	Anticipated Due Date	Completion Date
Training		
Receive final motivational interviewing training results from DVR; share with workgroup members.	March 2012	March 31, 2012
Finalize DVR-ESD online referral; provide status updates to workgroup.	April 2012	April 30, 2012

⁹ Reflects the January – June 2012 Action Plan; older versions can be accessed on the [Work Group 1 website](#).

Coordinate with ESD Training Academy on additional frontline and partner staff training opportunities, such as training regarding disability services.	September 30, 2012	
HR 3630 Implementation		
Timely implementation of HR 3630 (reemployment services to EUC claimants).	Ongoing	Ongoing
Train frontline staff regarding requirements under HR 3630.	Ongoing	Ongoing

Other

Milestone	Date Completed
Provide an annual progress report to the Workforce Board.	TBD: November 15, 2012
Provided an 18-month progress report to the Workforce Board.	June 28, 2012

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Appendix A: indicator dashboard



Retooling Washington Work Group 1: Coordinated outreach to unemployment insurance (UI) exhaustees

Amy Leneker
Employment Security Department

Directive

“Coordinated outreach to UI exhaustees, including demographic breakdown of who is in the pool, some market analysis of skills available and work history, development of service tool chest and identification of service points for referral. Also includes development of the actual outreach strategy (materials, single website, etc.)”

Deliverables

The three key deliverables are:

- 1) Exhaustee data
- 2) Exhaustee outreach plan/resource referral information for exhaustees
- 3) Resource referral toolkits for service providers

Schedule

Description	Due date	Status
Convene workgroup	10/27/10	Completed
Convene regular workgroup meetings	Ongoing	Ongoing
Workforce Board approve charter	11/18/10	Completed
Present 18-month progress report to Workforce Board.	6/28/12	Completed
Present annual progress report to Workforce Board.	11/15/12	

Indicators (data as of June 20, 2012)

Description/target	February 2012	March 2012	April 2012	May 2012
1) Exhaustee data				
Number of exhaustees	74,600 ¹ total	76,100 ¹ total	87,000 ¹ total	99,150 ¹ total
2) Exhaustee outreach plan/resource referral information				
Number of exhaustees who received a service through WorkSource	2,238	1,852	1,964	Data in progress
Number of statewide auto-dialer messages	2,960	2,030	1,824	11,722
Number of UI claimants within a month of exhausting who visited WorkSource	577	491	403	Data in progress
3) Resource referral toolkits for service providers				
HR 3630 Implementation				
Timely implementation of HR 3630 (reemployment services to EUC claimants)	N/A	In progress	In progress	In progress
Number of EUC claimants called in for an orientation.	N/A	N/A	7,000 ³	5,000 ¹
4) Outcomes				
Number of exhaustees who found employment	22,800 ² (30%)	22,800 ² (30%)	23,350 ² (30%)	24,850 ² (26%)
Percentage of exhaustees who filed a new claim	3,400 ² (4%)	3,400 ² (4%)	5,000 ² (6%)	5,950 ² (6%)

¹Data rounded, ²4th quarter 2011; ³77% attendance rate (data rounded); ⁴Approximately 140 process aids available on major training topics.



Appendix B: local strategies

Workforce Development Area (WDA) Map



Local Strategies to Serve the Long-term Unemployed: Clallam, Jefferson and Kitsap Counties

May 2012

Background

In response to the lengthy economic downturn and more individuals on extended Unemployment (UI) benefits, the Employment Security Department has focused its efforts and investments on helping claimants return to work faster, thus reducing the likelihood of exhausting benefits. The Olympic Workforce Development Area (WDA) encompasses the Olympic Peninsula and Kitsap Peninsula, including Clallam, Jefferson, and Kitsap counties. In April 2012, the number of residents in the WDA receiving any form of unemployment insurance was over 7,800. To date, nearly 3,375 claimants have exhausted all their benefits. Recognizing the varied labor markets and diverse customer demographics, the WorkSource teams in the Olympic Area continue to explore targeted strategies to help job seekers return to work as quickly as possible. This includes maximizing the return on investment of staff time and effort by focusing on the motivated job seeker.

Strategies

- **Outreach to the extended benefit claimants** – *Reaching out to the long-term unemployed.*

WorkSource teams schedule 100% of the new claimants profiled for WorkSource Services to attend a Reemployment Orientation. This session has been updated to better engage the job seeker with an explanation of the full array of employment and career development services. A job match is completed for all participants for potential job referrals. Directly following the presentation, each customer has the option of a one-on-one meeting with a WorkSource Specialist to review job matches, get job referrals, and assess specific job readiness needs and next steps.

A strategy for supporting the long term unemployed involves implementation of a focused follow-up contact with claimants who are early on in their benefits, yet have not been in for services within eight weeks of the initial service. The theory is that the sooner they are engaged in using WorkSource services for re-employment, the more likely they will return to work more quickly and avoid moving into the extended benefit phase of unemployment.

Effective November 2010, Veterans Employment Services Specialists send an invitation to all new military (UCX) claimants who would otherwise not be scheduled in for a WorkSource reemployment orientation. This initial session provided newly separated veterans with a full overview of veterans' specific employment services to include referral to our military to civilian transitional skills workshop in Kitsap and connection with workforce development partner services.

WorkSource teams within the Olympic Area utilized targeted mailings to connect with job seekers, including a targeted focus on those who exhausted all unemployment insurance benefits and those close to exhaustion. This resulted in a 3% response rate from the UI exhausters with 19% reporting a return to work. Mailings sent to those projected to exhaust in 4 weeks resulted in a 7% response rate. These outcomes did not reach our expectations causing us to move our focus on to earlier intervention for the motivated job seeker.

- **Re-employment Services** – *Providing tools for the long-term unemployed to find work.*

Each WorkSource center offers a series of workshops that are designed to develop and improve job search strategies and techniques to include the foundational skills and abilities assessment, resume

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development and interview preparation. Job seekers are taught how to identify their unique skill sets, personal work qualities, and preferred work environment so as to successfully compete for employment opportunities. Job seekers have the support of various additional programs at their local WorkSource centers to enhance marketability and stay motivated, positive and hopeful about getting a job, including:

- **Job/Networking Clubs** – WorkSource centers in the Olympic Area offer job clubs to individuals in job transition as an opportunity to network with others in similar circumstances as well as sharpen their job search skills and stay motivated throughout the job searching process.
 - **Career Development** – WorkSource Centers actively promote KeyTrain skill building courses and certificates that improve work skills, improve apprenticeship and college entrance exam scores, GED preparation, and for documentation of skill level proficiencies for job applications.
 - **Online application and resume development labs** – WorkSource centers offer staff facilitated computer labs for customers who require the next level of support in completing targeted resumes and successfully navigating the on-line employer application processes.
 - **Dealing with Job Loss** – WorkSource centers offer a customized workshop to assist job seekers in understanding their feelings of grief and depression during a period of unemployment and how to start over.
- **Training Referrals** – *Connecting job seekers to career development opportunities.*

Olympic Area WorkSource Centers offer career development opportunities through federally funded Workforce Investment Act (WIA) programs, Air Washington grants, Workforce Development Worker Retraining through Olympic and Peninsula Colleges, and training through private career schools and vocational technical colleges.

A Training Resources workshop helps the customer learn about the various resources and services available to better leverage training costs. Job seekers collecting unemployment benefits learn about the Commissioner Approved Training and Training Benefits programs and how they work together to develop a viable career development and training plan.

On site WIA partnerships serve to streamline and integrate the job seeker information and referral process to needed training resources. Funding for on-the-job training programs for high demand industry sectors has resulted in a PY 11 3rd quarter 92% entered employment rate with targeted private sector employers.

WorkSource centers offer opportunities for long-term unemployed job seekers to improve their skills at no charge.

- Microsoft office classes and unlimited access to Microsoft's comprehensive e-Learning library is available at WorkSource offices. These resources allow job seekers to increase their computer skills and be more competitive in today's job market.
- A staff facilitated Key-Train lab for testing and skill building with over 25 job related lesson plans including Business Writing, Applied Mathematics, Workplace Effectiveness, and Job Search is also available. Key-Train certifications are used by employers listing jobs with WorkSource to assist with the screening process.

Contact

Margaret Hess, Area Director, Olympic Workforce Development Area
Employment Security Department
360.337.4747 | MHess@esd.wa.gov

Local Strategies to Serve the Long-term Unemployed

Grays Harbor, Mason, Thurston, Pacific and Lewis Counties

May 2012

Background

In response to the lengthy economic downturn and more individuals on extended Unemployment (UI) benefits, the Employment Security Department has focused its efforts and investments on helping claimants return to work faster, thus reducing the likelihood of exhausting benefits. The Pacific Mountain Workforce Development Area encompasses Grays Harbor, Mason, Thurston, Pacific and Lewis counties. In April, 2012 there were more than 13,800 people collecting unemployment benefits in the Pacific Mountain Area. To date, nearly 6,200 individuals have exhausted all of their benefits. Recognizing the unique and urgent needs of these job seekers, WorkSource teams in the Pacific Mountain Area have implemented several targeted strategies to help them return to work.

Strategies

1. Targeted Outreach – *Reaching out to the long-term unemployed.*

At WorkSource offices within the Pacific Mountain Area, claimants receiving unemployment benefits through federal and state extensions get the focused and individual attention they need to get back to work. These job seekers are invited to attend an orientation at their local WorkSource office and receive one-on-one support from staff.

The orientation explains available employment services and focuses on overcoming barriers many long-term unemployed claimants face, such as depression, loss of confidence or the need to access other community resources. Each job seeker also receives a one-on-one assessment to identify their skills and determine his or her best options for finding meaningful employment.

2. Re-employment Services – *Providing tools for the long-term unemployed to find work.*

Each WorkSource office offers a series of workshops that specifically address the needs of unemployment-insurance claimants. The workshops are designed to improve job-search skills, including resume development and interview preparation. Job seekers are also taught how to identify their unique skill sets and to effectively market those skills to employers. Most WorkSource offices also provide job seekers the support of a job club; for example:

- **Retraining Workshops for the Unemployed** – WorkSource Lewis and Mason County offices provide weekly retraining workshops for the long-term unemployed. Claimants learn about training resources available through WorkSource and those available at community colleges for low income adults and dislocated workers.
- **Marketing Yourself** – WorkSource Thurston County offers this workshop which focuses on how to market yourself through online applications and how to successfully navigate Federal employment websites.
- **Improving Computer Skills** – Critical to a successful job search, a lack of current computer skills can seem an insurmountable barrier for many job seekers. WorkSource Thurston offers weekly workshops for job seekers to build computer skills. Topics include basic computer skills, creating email accounts, and navigating Go2WorkSource.com and other job search websites.

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- **Targeted Business Outreach** – Staff in the local WorkSource offices contact the long-term unemployed, using our Claimant Progress Tool, and invite them to apply for jobs listed through WorkSource—matching their skills, abilities and desired occupation.
- **GED Classes** – Our WorkSource offices in Mason and Shelton counties coordinate with the local community colleges to offer free GED classes on sight. Many of today’s jobs require a H.S. Diploma or GED and having this credential will lead to increased job prospects for those that have been unemployed for some time.

3. Training Referrals – *Connecting job seekers to training and education opportunities.*

WorkSource offices offer training opportunities and referrals to education and training programs, including WIA programs and local community and technical colleges. The Washington State Employment Security Department has contracted with Microsoft to offer unlimited access to Microsoft’s comprehensive e-Learning library to WorkSource customers so that they can increase their computer skills and be more competitive in today’s job market.

To assist with the costs of training, job seekers collecting unemployment benefits have access to the Training Benefits program. The Training Benefits program offers additional weeks of unemployment benefits so eligible job seekers can train for careers in high-demand fields. The long term unemployed receive one-on-one staff assistance, as needed, to help in preparing their Training Benefit application.

Contact

M. Todd Dixon, Area Director, Pacific Mountain Workforce Development Area
Employment Security Department
360.570.4231 | tdixon@esd.wa.gov

Local Strategies to Serve the Long-term Unemployed

Whatcom, Skagit, San Juan and Island Counties

May, 2012

Background

In response to the lengthy economic downturn and more individuals on extended Unemployment (UI) benefits, the Employment Security Department has focused its efforts and investments on helping claimants return to work faster, thus reducing the likelihood of exhausting benefits. The Northwest Workforce Development Area encompasses Whatcom, Skagit, San Juan and Island counties. In April, 2012 there were more than 9,470 people collecting unemployment benefits in the Northwest Area. To date, nearly 4,300 individuals had exhausted all of their benefits. Recognizing the unique and urgent needs of these job seekers, WorkSource teams in the Northwest Area have implemented several targeted strategies to help them return to work.

Strategies

1. Targeted Outreach – *Reaching out to the long-term unemployed.*

At local WorkSource offices within the Northwest Area, claimants receiving Emergency Unemployment Compensation (EUC) get the focused attention they need to get back to work. These job seekers are invited to attend special orientations that explain all the employment services available to them and ensure they are meeting their unemployment insurance program compliance obligations. The orientations also focus on overcoming barriers many long-term unemployed claimants face, such as loss of confidence or the need to access other community resources.

2. Re-employment Services – *Providing tools for the long-term unemployed to find work.*

Each WorkSource office offers a series of workshops that specifically address the needs of unemployment-insurance claimants. The workshops are designed to improve job-search skills, including resume development and interview preparation. Job seekers are also taught how to identify their unique skill sets and to effectively market those skills to employers. Additionally, job seekers have the support of unique programs at their local offices:

- **Job Club** – WorkSource Whatcom offers this unique, weekly opportunity for job seekers to network with each other. Job seekers learn about employment opportunities and receive support in their job search.
- **Financial Planning Assistance** – WorkSource Whatcom and WorkSource Skagit offer workshops for job seekers to help cope with the financial difficulties of long-term unemployment. The workshops are taught by local financial professionals and cover topics such as managing debt and credit repair, avoiding evictions and utility disconnects, developing spending plans and where to find other local resources.

3. Up-skilling and Retraining – *Connecting job seekers to training and education opportunities.*

WorkSource offices in the Northwest Area offer referrals to training opportunities at community and technical colleges such as the Professional Technical Certificates offered at Skagit Valley College. To assist with the costs of training, job seekers collecting unemployment benefits have access to the Training Benefits program. The Training Benefits program offers additional weeks of unemployment benefits so eligible job seekers can train for careers in high-demand fields.

Employment Security Department • Employment & Career Development Division

Additionally, job seekers may be referred to federally funded WIA training opportunities, such as On-the-Job training, for dislocated workers and others who are experiencing prolonged unemployment. WorkSource teams work in partnership with the Northwest Workforce Council to refer job applicants who could benefit from this opportunity.

Northwest WorkSource centers also offer opportunities for long-term unemployed job seekers to improve their computer skills at no charge. Critical to a successful job search, a lack of current computer skills can seem to be an insurmountable barrier for many job seekers.

- WorkSource offices in Whatcom and Skagit counties offer weekly workshops for job seekers to build computer skills. Topics include introduction to the PC, creating documents, setting up a web based email account and how to use Go2WorkSource.com.
- Through WorkSource, job seekers have unlimited access to Microsoft's comprehensive e-Learning library. With Microsoft's classes, job seekers can increase their computer skills and be more competitive in today's job market.

Contact

CJ Seitz, Area Director, Northwest Workforce Development Area
Employment Security Department
360.676.3204 | Cseitz@esd.wa.gov

Snohomish County Strategies to Serve the Long-term Unemployed

May 2012

Background

In response to the lengthy economic downturn and more individuals on extended Unemployment (UI) benefits, the Employment Security Department has focused its efforts and investments on helping claimants return to work faster, thus reducing the likelihood of exhausting benefits. In April 2012, there were nearly 19,000 people collecting unemployment benefits in Snohomish County. More than 10,700 individuals already had exhausted all of their benefits. In general, the longer a person is on unemployment, the more likely they are to experience basic needs and motivational issues. Recognizing the unique needs of these job seekers, WorkSource teams in Snohomish County have developed several new strategies to help them return to work.

Strategies

1. Targeted Outreach – *Reaching out to the long-term unemployed.*

At WorkSource offices in Snohomish County, claimants receiving unemployment benefits through federal extensions get the focused and individual attention they need to get back to work. These job seekers are invited to attend exclusive orientations that motivate job seekers in their search for work and explain employment services available to them. The orientations also focus on overcoming barriers many long-term unemployed claimants face, such as depression, loss of confidence or the need to access other community resources. Following the orientations, job seekers can receive one-on-one job search assistance, resume review, referral to potential job openings and customized labor market information. Follow up services linking customers with potential job openings, labor market information, and employment readiness tools are distributed via email.

2. Re-employment Services – *Providing tools for the long-term unemployed to find work.*

Each WorkSource office offers a series of workshops that specifically address the needs of long-term unemployed job seekers. The workshops are designed to improve job-search skills, including resume development and interview preparation. Job seekers are also taught how to identify their unique skill sets and to effectively market those skills to employers. Job seekers have the support of many additional programs at their local offices, including:

- **Networking Groups/Job Clubs** – These groups provide individuals in job transition the opportunity to network with others in similar circumstances as well as sharpen their job search skills and stay motivated and focused throughout the job searching process.
- **Putting Your Skills to Work** – In this workshop, job seekers will uncover and identify skills gained through job(s) and life experiences and learn how to successfully sell those skills and showcase themselves effectively in today's job market.
- **Other customized workshops** – Designed to meet emerging hiring trends of employers, and tailored to the demographic needs of the job seeker

3. Training Referrals – *Connecting job seekers to training and education opportunities.*

WorkSource offices offer training opportunities and referrals to training, including WIA programs and

Employment Security Department • Employment & Career Development Division

local community and technical colleges. One opportunity offered to job seekers through WorkSource is unlimited access to Microsoft's comprehensive e-Learning library. With Microsoft's classes, job seekers can increase their computer skills and be more competitive in today's job market.

To assist with the costs of training, job seekers collecting unemployment benefits have access to the Training Benefits program. The Training Benefits program offers additional weeks of unemployment benefits so eligible job seekers can train for careers in high-demand fields.

4. Community Resource Outreach – *Connecting UI exhaustees (and those nearing UI exhaustion) to Community Resources*

WorkSource Snohomish County coordinates quarterly Community Resource outreach event for every claimant nearing the exhaustion of their U.I. claim. Emails and post card invitations are sent out to every claimant who potentially is slated to exhaust their unemployment benefits during the quarter, inviting them to attend our quarterly community resource fair. The goal of the event is to reengage targeted customers with WorkSource services and valuable community resources. Participating entities and services offered include, but not limited to:

- **WorkSource Snohomish County** – WorkSource sets up a variety of tables marketing available services, including: WIA Adult & Dislocated Workers programs, Business Services with referrals to available positions, and WorkSource Core Services (Workshops, Resume Assistance, etc...)
- **ESD, Unemployment Insurance Division** – A representative from the UI Telecenter Rapid Response team was available to answer general UI and extension related questions
- **DSHS** – Representatives and contractors assist customers with access to food, medical and financial assistance
- **Housing Hope** – Representatives provide access to potential housing assistance
- **YWCA** – Representatives provide access to potential support and reemployment services
- **Social Security Dept.** – Representatives answer questions and provide enrollment assistance for potential social security benefits
- **Northwest Business Center** – Representatives answer questions, market no-cost workshops and financial assistance for starting your own business
- **VA Veterans Center** – Representatives answer Veterans' benefits related questions and provide enrollment assistance for potential Veterans' medical benefits
- **Catholic Community Services** – Representatives answer questions and assist with enrollment for a variety of social service programs, including: housing, reemployment and transportation
- **Snohomish County Human Services** – an array of offerings from assistance with utility bills to health services
- **Volunteers of America** - VOA is well known for offering primary emergency services such as food, shelter assistance, housing assistance, child care, transportation

5. Targeting Veterans – *Resources exclusively for long-term unemployed Veterans*

In addition to all of the services for general long-term unemployed job seekers, there are several strategies focused exclusively on serving Veterans including:

- **Customized workshops** for Veterans, and long-term unemployed Veterans. For example, Snohomish WorkSource locations see more Veterans apply for federal jobs. To respond, a workshop was designed to assist Veterans with the complicated federal application process as noted above.
- **Targeted outreach** to Veterans. Job listings are matched automatically with the work experience

and desired occupations of Veterans and long-term unemployed Veterans who are then notified electronically of jobs they are a match for.

Contact

Julie Lord, Area Director, Snohomish County Workforce Development Area
Employment Security Department
425.258.6360 | JLord@esd.wa.gov

King County Strategies to Serve the Long-term Unemployed

June 2012

Background

In response to the lengthy economic downturn and more individuals on extended Unemployment (UI) benefits, the Employment Security Department has focused its efforts and investments on helping claimants return to work faster, thus reducing the likelihood of exhausting benefits. In April 2012, more than 42,600 individuals were receiving unemployment insurance benefits in King County. To date nearly 25,200 individuals have exhausted all unemployment insurance benefits. As a result of these unprecedented times, WorkSource teams in King County are committed to having a focused and consistent strategy for providing job search assistance and skill enhancements for long-term unemployed job seekers.

Strategies

What Has Been Done in the Past – WorkSource offices in King County have used various strategies in the past to help long-term unemployed job seekers find work. The type of services provided varied from office to office and included workshops, one-on-one support from staff in the form of job readiness assessments, job matching, job referrals, case management, and various methods of follow-up.

Current Strategies – Due to the increasing number of long-term unemployed job seekers, the following new strategies have been developed.

Targeted Outreach - Claimants receiving unemployment benefits through federal and state extensions get the focused and individual attention they need to get back to work. These job seekers are invited to attend exclusive workshops at their local WorkSource office and receive one-on-one support from staff.

The workshop explains employment services available to them and focuses on assisting customers in evaluating the effectiveness of their job search and their ability to market themselves. By the end of the workshop, customers have an “action plan” that will incorporate new strategies and approaches to their job search. The workshop also deals with barriers many long-term unemployed claimants face, such as depression, loss of confidence or the need to access other community resources.

Re-employment Services - Each office also offers a menu of services to the long-term unemployed such as one-on-one assessments to identify transferable skills and determine his or her best options for finding meaningful employment. Job seekers have the support of additional programs at their local offices, including:

- **Job Hunter Workshops** – WorkSource offices offer a series of workshops that specifically address the needs of long-term unemployed job seekers. The workshops are designed to improve job search skills, including resume development and interview preparation.
- **Job/Networking Clubs** – Several WorkSource offices in King County offer job clubs to individuals in job transition as an opportunity to network with others in similar circumstances. The clubs are also a way to sharpen their job search skills and stay motivated and focused throughout the job searching process.

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Training Referrals - WorkSource offices offer training opportunities and referrals to training, including federally funded WIA programs and local community and technical colleges. To assist with the costs of training, job seekers collecting unemployment benefits have access to the Training Benefits program. The Training Benefits program offers additional weeks of unemployment benefits so eligible job seekers can train for careers in high-demand fields. Two examples of training opportunities in King County are Rails to Careers and Microsoft-e-learning.

- Rails to Careers, provides a great opportunity to work in the railway industry. Seattle King County Workforce Development Council and Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway are working together to offer on the job training opportunities to those unemployed 20 weeks or longer.
- Unlimited access to Microsoft's comprehensive e-Learning library is offered to job seekers at no cost through WorkSource. With Microsoft's classes, job seekers can increase their computer skills and be more competitive in today's job market.

Contacts

Greta Kaas-Lent, Area Director, Seattle-King County Workforce Development Area
Employment Security Department
253.804.1157 | GKaaslent@esd.wa.gov

Albert Garza, Deputy Area Director, Seattle-King County Workforce Development Area
Employment Security Department
253.804.1145 | AGarza@esd.wa.gov

Pierce County Strategies to Serve the Long-term Unemployed

May, 2012

Background

In response to the lengthy economic downturn and more individuals on extended Unemployment (UI) benefits, the Employment Security Department has focused its efforts and investments on helping claimants return to work faster, thus reducing the likelihood of exhausting benefits. In April 2012, there were more than 23,000 people collecting unemployment benefits in Pierce County. To date, almost 12,000 individuals in Pierce County have already exhausted their benefits. In response, the Pierce County leadership team has implemented re-employment strategies to help unemployment-insurance (UI) claimants return to work faster and reducing their likelihood of exhausting benefits.

Federal changes create local opportunities

In February, Congress adopted legislation extending the Emergency Unemployment Compensation (EUC) program through the end of 2012. As part of the extension, Congress required recipients of EUC to participate in WorkSource re-employment services. Beginning the week of April 9, WorkSource offices in Pierce County began contacting affected categories of EUC claimants to provide them with a WorkSource orientation, skill assessment, labor-market information and a job search-log review. This federal change requires the affected claimants to participate when scheduled or risk losing unemployment benefits. Staff across Pierce County are using Washington State's [Re-Employment Preparedness Form](#) to update information critical to the re-employment of these long-term unemployed job seekers. With this updated information staff are conducting a follow-up phone call to 100% of the EUC claimants who attend the orientation. For those claimants willing to engage in the process we are targeting and individualizing re-employment services to these claimants based on their particular situation and motivation.

Re-employment Strategies

1. **Targeted Outreach** – *Reaching out to both short and long-term unemployed.*

WorkSource offices within Pierce County have expanded the distribution and use of the [Re-Employment Preparedness Form](#) to include new and short-term claimants who attend any of our orientations. Requiring all claimants to complete the form has created an opportunity for staff to target and individualize outreach and re-employment services for both short and long-term unemployed claimants.

2. **Integrated Services** – *Coordinating our services to assist the unemployed and employers.*

Those job seekers who respond to our outreach efforts by submitting a resume, making an appointment or attending a workshop can take advantage of the number of services provided by our labor exchange

Employment Security Department • Employment & Career Development Division

staff, our business services team and our Career Brokers. Some of the many services offered to these job seekers are resume assistance, mock interviews, job development, job coaching, skill assessment, and career counseling.

3. Mission Possible – *Building the bridge between the long-term unemployed and employers.*

Mission Possible seeks to provide those job seekers at the highest risk of running out of unemployment insurance benefits the tools they need to get back to work quickly. With Mission Possible, job seekers get individualized support from a professional job counselor to match their skills with local employers' needs. Some of the many services offered to these job seekers are resume assistance, mock interviews, job development, job coaching, skill assessment, and career counseling.

4. WorkSource on Wheels – *Providing re-employment services in remote areas of Pierce County.*

Through a unique and innovative partnership with the Pierce County and Puyallup Libraries we are leveraging local resources to take our show on the road. WorkSource on Wheels allows us to provide re-employment services to job seekers in the rural areas of Pierce County. This partnership has resulted in an ongoing schedule of workshops being presented in Orting, Roy, Buckley, Eatonville and Key Peninsula.

5. Creative Workshops – *Providing creative workshops to address the needs of short and long-term unemployed.*

- *Mature Workers* - Employment tips for job seekers age 55+, although seekers of all ages are invited to attend. Focus is on debunking myths of maturity, de-aging your resume and other age related concerns.
- *Managing Stress* – An opportunity to learn more about stress and its impact on each of us. How stress can and does impact the process of job seeking and other aspects of an individual's life. The class provides information and some basic resources for responding to stressful situations.
- *LinkedIn* - An hour of hands-on personal assistance for jobseekers interested in getting started on LinkedIn.com, as well as those seeking to make their profile more effective.
- *Social Media* - The new approach to job search has to reflect advances in current technology. Social media is becoming an increasingly necessary tool in finding a new job. This class shares ideas on using this powerful tool to your advantage.

Contact

Carmen Cook, Area Director, Tacoma-Pierce Workforce Development Area
Employment Security Department
253.680.2888 | cjcook@esd.wa.gov

Local Strategies to Serve the Long-term Unemployed: Clark, Cowlitz and Wahkiakum Counties

June 2012

Background

In response to the lengthy economic downturn and more individuals on extended Unemployment (UI) benefits, the Employment Security Department has focused its efforts and investments on helping claimants return to work faster, thus reducing the likelihood of exhausting benefits. The Southwest Workforce Development Area encompasses Clark, Cowlitz and Wahkiakum counties. In April 2012, there were nearly 11,000 people collecting unemployment benefits in the Southwest Area. More than 6,294 individuals had already exhausted all of their benefits. Recognizing the unique and urgent needs of these job seekers, WorkSource teams in the Southwest Area have implemented several targeted strategies to help them return to work.

Strategies

1. Targeted Outreach – *Reaching out to the long-term unemployed.*

At WorkSource offices within the Southwest Area, claimants receiving unemployment benefits through federal extensions get the focused and individual attention they need to get back to work. These job seekers are invited to attend an exclusive orientation at their local WorkSource office and receive one-on-one support from staff.

The orientation explains available employment services and focuses on overcoming barriers many long-term unemployed claimants face, such as depression, loss of confidence or the need to access other community resources. Job seekers can also receive a one-on-one assessment to identify transferable skills and determine his or her best options for finding meaningful employment.

2. Re-employment Services – *Providing tools for the long-term unemployed to find work.*

Each WorkSource office offers a series of workshops that specifically address the needs of long-term unemployed job seekers. The workshops are designed to improve job search skills, including resume development and interview preparation. Job seekers are taught how to identify their unique skill sets and to effectively market those skills to employers. Job seekers have the support of additional programs at their local offices, including:

- **Continuous Engagement** – Job seekers have the opportunity to work one-on-one with an employment counselor and are exposed to jobs in the industry in which they are skilled to return to work in. Assessment and employment planning is also offered to assist long term unemployed job seeker to reach their employment goals.
- **Job Clubs** – WorkSource offices in the Southwest Area offer job clubs to individuals in job transition as an opportunity to network with others in similar circumstances as well as sharpen their job search skills and stay motivated and focused throughout the job searching process.
- **Improving Computer Skills** – Critical to a successful job search, a lack of current computer skills can seem an insurmountable barrier for many job seekers. Short cut desk aids are provided in the WorkSource Vancouver Resource room for customers to use. Creating email accounts and navigating Go2WorkSource.com and other job search websites are some of the components

Employment Security Department • Employment & Career Development Division

covered in other workshops. At WorkSource Cowlitz/Wahkiakum, basic computer classes are offered weekly for clients.

- **Money Smart** – WorkSource Cowlitz/Wahkiakum offers this workshop for job seekers to help cope with the financial difficulties of long-term unemployment. The workshops cover topics such as managing debt, avoiding evictions and developing spending plans.

3. Training Referrals – *Connecting job seekers to training and education opportunities.*

WorkSource offices offer training opportunities and referrals to training, including WIA programs and local community and technical colleges, such as programs at Lower Columbia College and Clark College. One opportunity offered to job seekers through WorkSource is unlimited access to Microsoft's comprehensive e-Learning library. With Microsoft's classes, job seekers can increase their computer skills and be more competitive in today's job market.

To assist with the costs of training, job seekers collecting unemployment benefits have access to the Training Benefits program. The Training Benefits program offers additional weeks of unemployment benefits so eligible job seekers can train for careers in high-demand fields.

Contact

Robert Brown, Area Director, Southwest Workforce Development Area
Employment Security Department
360.735.4950 | RBrown@esd.wa.gov

Local Strategies to Serve the Long-term Unemployed:

Okanogan, Chelan, Douglas, Grant and Adams Counties

May 2012

Background

In response to the lengthy economic downturn and more individuals on extended Unemployment (UI) benefits, the Employment Security Department has focused its efforts and investments on helping claimants return to work faster, thus reducing the likelihood of exhausting benefits. The North Central Workforce Development Area encompasses Okanogan, Chelan, Douglas, Grant and Adams counties. In April 2012, there were 8,283 people collecting unemployment benefits in the North Central Area. To date, nearly 2,125 people have exhausted their benefits in the North Central Area. Recognizing the unique and urgent needs of these job seekers, WorkSource teams in the North Central Area have implemented several targeted strategies to help them return to work.

Strategies

1. Targeted Outreach and Follow-up – *Reaching out to long-term unemployed job seekers.*

At WorkSource offices within the North Central Area, claimants receiving unemployment benefits through federal extensions (Extended Unemployment Compensation) receive the focused and individual attention they need to return to work. The Department of Labor (DOL) has provided an opportunity for claimants on Tier 1 and 2 to attend a mandatory workshop. This workshop is comprised of access to assessment tools, labor market information, and review of job search logs. Job seekers who are invited to attend receive special attention and information about current job openings that may be a good match to their skills.

The orientation explains available employment services and focuses on overcoming barriers many long-term unemployed claimants face, such as depression, loss of confidence or the need to access other community resources. Job seekers can also receive a one-on-one assessment to identify transferable skills and determine his or her best options for finding meaningful employment. Included in the workshop is a One-Stop Video that explains the various services available in the Career Centers.

Additionally, WorkSource teams in the North Central Area are dedicated to reconnecting with job seekers who meet one or more of several criteria such as not having been to a WorkSource office in 60 days or having exhausted unemployment benefits. The goal of this focused follow-up effort is to reengage job seekers who may have lost touch with the WorkSource office or who might benefit the most from the services and activities available.

2. Re-employment Services – *Providing tools for the long-term unemployed to find work.*

Each WorkSource office offers a series of workshops that specifically address the needs of long-term unemployed job seekers. The workshops are designed to improve job search skills, including resume development and interview preparation. Job seekers are taught how to identify their unique skill sets and to effectively market those skills to employers. Job seekers have the support of additional services at their local offices, including:

Employment Security Department • Employment & Career Development Division

- **Job seekers** have the opportunity to work one-on-one with an employment counselor. Weekly email communication to job seekers about job openings relevant to their skill occurs on a regular basis.
- **WorkSource offices** in the North Central Area offer individuals an opportunity to sharpen their job search skills and stay motivated and focused throughout the job search process through targeted workshops.

3. **Training Referrals** – *Connecting job seekers to training and education opportunities.*

WorkSource offices offer training opportunities and referrals to training, including WIA and TAA programs. In addition, local community and technical colleges, such as Wenatchee Valley College and Big Bend College, are active training partners. One opportunity offered to job seekers through WorkSource is unlimited access to Microsoft's comprehensive e-Learning library. With Microsoft's classes, job seekers can increase their computer skills and be more competitive in today's job market.

To assist with the costs of training, job seekers collecting unemployment benefits have access to the Training Benefits program. The Training Benefits program offers additional weeks of unemployment benefits so eligible job seekers can train for careers in high-demand fields.

Contact

Marcia Henkle, Area Director, North Central Workforce Development Area
Employment Security Department
509.665.3733 | MHenkle@esd.wa.gov

Local Strategies to Serve the Long-term Unemployed:

Kittitas, Yakima, Skamania and Klickitat Counties

June 2012

Background

In response to the lengthy economic downturn and more individuals on extended Unemployment (UI) benefits, the Employment Security Department has focused its efforts and investments on helping claimants return to work faster, thus reducing the likelihood of exhausting benefits. The South Central Workforce Development Area encompasses Kittitas, Yakima, Skamania and Klickitat counties. In April 2012, there were more than 11,300 people collecting unemployment benefits in the South Central Area. To date, nearly 2,750 individuals had already exhausted all of their benefits. Many job seekers in this area are seasonal workers, from agricultural, construction and retail industries. Recognizing the unique and urgent needs of these job seekers, WorkSource teams in the South Central Area have implemented several new strategies to help them return to work.

Strategies

1. Targeted Outreach – *Reaching out to the long-term unemployed.*

At WorkSource offices within the South Central Area, claimants receiving unemployment benefits through federal and state extensions get the focused and individual attention they need to get back to work. These job seekers are invited to attend exclusive orientations, offered in English and Spanish, at their local WorkSource offices and receive one-on-one support from staff. This orientation is comprised of access to assessment tools, labor market information, and review of job search logs. Job seekers who are invited to attend receive special attention and information about current job openings that may be a good match to their skills.

The orientations explain available employment services and focus on overcoming barriers many long-term unemployed claimants face, such as depression, loss of confidence or the need to access other community resources. Following the orientations, job seekers can receive a one-on-one assessment to develop an employment plan. Each individual's plan will help to identify transferable skills and determine his or her best options for finding meaningful employment. Additional services are available to job seekers; including resume assistance, mock interviews, job development, job coaching, skill assessment, and career counseling.

2. Re-employment Services – *Providing tools for the long-term unemployed to find work.*

Each WorkSource office offers a series of workshops that specifically address the needs of long-term unemployed job seekers. The workshops are designed to improve job search skills, including resume development and interview preparation. Job seekers are taught how to identify their unique skill sets and to effectively market those skills to employers. Job seekers have the support of additional programs at their local offices, such as:

- **Hiring Events** – Special and specific hiring events are offered to job seekers based on their former occupation or work history with a specific industry. For example, retail companies offer an opportunity to apply for their job openings on-site at WorkSource offices. For the agricultural industry, local growers and fruit warehouse employers are invited to attend hiring events closer to where workers may live.

Employment Security Department • Employment & Career Development Division

- **Basic Computer Classes** – Many of the job seekers in the area struggle with using computers or the Internet to find employment. WorkSource offices offer basic computer classes every week to English and Spanish-speaking customers.

3. **Training Referrals** – *Connecting job seekers to training and education opportunities.*

WorkSource offices offer training opportunities and referrals to training, including WIA programs and local community and technical colleges. To assist with the costs of training, job seekers collecting unemployment benefits have access to the Training Benefits program. The Training Benefits program offers additional weeks of unemployment benefits so eligible job seekers can train for careers in high-demand fields.

To assist with the costs of training, job seekers collecting unemployment benefits have access to the Training Benefits program. The Training Benefits program offers additional weeks of unemployment benefits so eligible job seekers can train for careers in high-demand fields.

Another opportunity offered to job seekers through WorkSource is unlimited access to Microsoft's comprehensive e-Learning library. With Microsoft's classes, job seekers can increase their computer skills and be more competitive in today's job market.

Contact

Ignacio Marquez, Area Director, South Central Workforce Development Area
Employment Security Department
509.574.0123 | IMarquez@esd.wa.gov

Local Strategies to Serve the Long-term Unemployed:

Ferry, Stevens, Pend Oreille, Lincoln, Whitman,
Walla Walla, Columbia, Garfield and Asotin Counties

May 2012

Background

In response to the lengthy economic downturn and more individuals on extended Unemployment (UI) benefits, the Employment Security Department has focused its efforts and investments on helping claimants return to work faster, thus reducing the likelihood of exhausting benefits. The Eastern Workforce Development Area encompasses Ferry, Stevens, Pend Oreille, Lincoln, Whitman, Walla Walla, Columbia, Garfield and Asotin counties. In April 2012, there were more than 3,600 people collecting unemployment benefits in the Eastern Area. To date, more than 1,350 individuals had already exhausted all of their benefits. Many job seekers in this area live in rural communities where there is high unemployment. Recognizing the unique and urgent needs of these job seekers, WorkSource teams in the Eastern Area continue to provide strategies to help them return to work.

Strategies

1. Re-employment Services – *Providing tools for the long-term unemployed to find work.*

Each WorkSource office offers a series of workshops that specifically address the needs of long-term unemployed job seekers. The workshops are designed to improve job search skills, including resume development and interview preparation. Job seekers are taught how to identify their unique skill sets and to effectively market those skills to employers. Additional services available to job seekers include:

- **Individualized Job Search Assistance** – Job seekers meet with a WorkSource employment counselor one-on-one to receive the focused attention they need to jumpstart their job search. During this engagement job search efforts are reviewed, labor market conditions are explored and new employment strategies are developed.
- **Connections to Community Resources** – WorkSource teams in the Eastern Area have been meeting with community organizations – including churches, health care organization, educational institutions, foundations, food banks, crisis centers, and over-55 providers. The meetings help to alert them to the growing number of long-term unemployed job seekers in their communities and to help devise support strategies while they continue to look for work. Job seekers can learn about community resources available to them and their families at their local WorkSource office.
- **Job Clubs** – WorkSource offices in the Eastern area offer job clubs to individuals in job transition as an opportunity to network with others in similar circumstances as well as sharpen their job search skills and stay motivated and focused throughout the job searching process.

2. Training Referrals – *Connecting job seekers to training and education opportunities.*

WorkSource offices offer training opportunities and referrals to training, including WIA programs and local community and technical colleges, including Community Colleges of Spokane and Walla Walla Community College. One opportunity offered to job seekers through WorkSource is unlimited access to Microsoft's comprehensive e-Learning library. With Microsoft's classes, job seekers can increase their computer skills and be more competitive in today's job market.

To assist with the costs of training, job seekers collecting unemployment benefits have access to the

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Training Benefits program. The Training Benefits program offers additional weeks of unemployment benefits so eligible job seekers can train for careers in high-demand fields.

3. Community Partnering – *Bridging gaps through increased networking*

WorkSource offices along with other service providers and community organizations have good linkages in place to assure the long-term unemployed have access to local services such as basic food, shelter, clothing, health services, mental health, energy and housing assistance. Collectively we offer pathways out of poverty through facilitated referrals to appropriate services and providers.

Contact

Jennie Weber, Area Director, Eastern Workforce Development Area
Employment Security Department
509.527.1801 | JWeber@esd.wa.gov

Strategies to Serve the Long-term Unemployed in Benton and Franklin Counties

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Background

In response to the lengthy economic downturn and more individuals on extended Unemployment (UI) benefits, the Employment Security Department has focused its efforts and investments on helping claimants return to work faster, thus reducing the likelihood of exhausting benefits. The WorkSource Columbia Basin office serves job seekers in Benton and Franklin counties. In April 2012, there were more than 8,000 people collecting unemployment benefits in Benton and Franklin counties. To date, nearly 1,570 individuals had already exhausted all of their benefits. Many job seekers in this area live in rural communities where much of the employment is seasonal and many speak limited English. Recognizing the unique and urgent needs of these job seekers, the team at WorkSource Columbia Basin has developed several unique strategies to help them return to work.

Strategies

1. Targeted Outreach – *Reaching out to the long-term unemployed.*

At WorkSource Columbia Basin, claimants receiving unemployment benefits through federal and state extensions get the focused and individual attention they need to get back to work. These job seekers are invited to attend an exclusive orientation, offered in English and Spanish, at their WorkSource office and receive one-on-one support from staff. Since the long-term unemployed orientations began earlier this year, 65% of the job seekers invited have attended.

The orientation helps to motivate the job seekers and explains employment services available to them. It also focuses on overcoming barriers many long-term unemployed claimants face, such as depression and the need to access other community resources. Following the orientations, job seekers can receive a one-on-one assessment to develop an action plan for their job search. Each individual's plan will help to identify transferable skills and determine his or her best options for finding meaningful employment.

2. Re-employment Services – *Providing tools for the long-term unemployed to find work.*

WorkSource Columbia Basin offers a series of workshops that specifically address the needs of long-term unemployed job seekers. The workshops are designed to improve job search skills, including resume development and interview preparation. Job seekers are taught how to identify their unique skill sets and to effectively market those skills to employers. Additionally, job seekers have the support of unique programs at their local office, including:

- **Employment Academies** – Job seekers have the opportunity to work one-on-one with an employment counselor and are assigned to an industry team based on their employment goals. Each industry team is invited to hear human resources professionals from their desired industry speak and receives communications with relevant job openings and hiring events.
- **Older Worker Workshops** – Long-term unemployed job seekers who are 53 and older may face additional barriers to finding work such as age discrimination and lack of current skills. These topics and more are covered in this workshop.

3. Up-skilling and Retraining – *Connecting job seekers to training and education opportunities.*

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WorkSource Columbia Basin offers referrals to training opportunities at community and technical colleges such as Columbia Basin College. WorkSource teams have partnered with Columbia Basin College to offer shorter programs to meet the short timeframe many long-term unemployed job seekers have to return to work. To assist with the costs of training, job seekers collecting unemployment benefits have access to the Training Benefits program. The Training Benefits program offers additional weeks of unemployment benefits so eligible job seekers can train for careers in high-demand fields.

Another opportunity offered to job seekers through WorkSource is unlimited access to Microsoft's comprehensive e-Learning library. With Microsoft's classes, job seekers can increase their computer skills and be more competitive in today's job market.

Contact

Michelle Mann, Area Director, Benton-Franklin Workforce Development Area
Employment Security Department
509.734.5945 | MMMann@esd.wa.gov

Spokane County Strategies to Serve the Long-Term Unemployed

May 2012

Background

In response to the lengthy economic downturn and more individuals on extended Unemployment (UI) benefits, the Employment Security Department has focused its efforts and investments on helping claimants return to work faster, thus reducing the likelihood of exhausting benefits. In April 2012, nearly 13,000 people were collecting unemployment benefits in Spokane County. To date, more than 5,800 individuals had used all of their benefits. Recognizing the unique and urgent needs of these job seekers, WorkSource teams in Spokane County have developed several new strategies to help them return to work.

Strategies

1. Targeted Outreach – *Reaching out to the long-term unemployed.*

At the WorkSource office in Spokane County, claimants receiving unemployment benefits through federal and state extensions get the focused and individual attention they need to get back to work. These job seekers are specifically invited to attend exclusive orientations that are meant to reenergize their search for work and explain employment services available to them. The orientations also focus on overcoming barriers many long-term UI claimants face, such as depression, loss of confidence or the need to access other community resources.

Following the orientations, these job seekers are strongly encouraged to sign up for ongoing intensive services with the Pathway to Rapid Re-employment program. The program provides information regarding available services, current labor market information in a conversational format and includes connections with Career Broker staff member for one-on-one employment assistance. Career Brokers help job seekers with their resume, mock interviews, job development, job coaching, skill assessment, and career counseling.

2. Re-employment Services – *Providing tools for the long-term unemployed to find work.*

The Spokane WorkSource office offers a series of workshops that specifically address the needs of long-term unemployed job seekers. The workshops help to improve job search skills, including resume development and interview preparation. Job seekers are taught how to identify their unique skill sets and to effectively market those skills to employers. Job seekers have the support of additional programs at their local office, including:

- **Meet the Employers!** – This unique opportunity allows job seekers to meet with a panel of local employers to learn about their companies and hear about current and future employment opportunities. The local employers are available to answer job seekers' questions about resumes and interviews and to network with the job seekers.
- **Hire U Job Club** – This new opportunity allows job seekers and Employment Specialists to network, build camaraderie, brainstorm, share struggles, develop job leads and gain job search advice, encouragement and support. These 8-week Job Clubs, which meet once/week for 2 hours, enable job seekers to build confidence in who they are and what they offer to employers. Initial data is showing that Hire U Job Club participants are finding employment quicker than those not participating, especially for those who have been unemployed for longer lengths of

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time.

3. Training Referrals – *Connecting job seekers to training and education opportunities.*

WorkSource offices offer training opportunities and referrals to training, including WIA programs and local community and technical colleges. One opportunity offered to job seekers through WorkSource is unlimited access to Microsoft’s comprehensive e-Learning library. With Microsoft’s classes, job seekers can increase their computer skills and be more competitive in today’s job market.

A newer opportunity offered to our longer-term unemployed through WorkSource Spokane is WorkKeys testing to obtain their National Career Readiness Certification (NCRC). WorkKeys is the career readiness part of ACT, the College Entrance Testing company. The NCRC is an industry-recognized, portable, evidence based credential that certifies essential skills needed for workplace success. This credential is used across all sectors of the economy and is used or recognized by tens of thousands of companies throughout the US as an effective predictor of success on the job. KeyTrain, also part of ACT, is offered to job seekers through ESD and WorkSource centers as the skill building or “practice” piece of the WorkKeys program. Job seekers are encouraged to use this tool to practice until they have achieved their highest level possible on the KeyTrain tests, prior to testing, to ensure an optimum score or achievement level on the NCRC.

To assist with the costs of training, job seekers collecting unemployment benefits have access to the Commissioner Approved Training (CAT) and Training Benefits (TB) programs. These programs allow eligible UI claimants to collect unemployment benefits while attending a full-time vocational training program focused on careers in high-demand fields.

Contact

John Dickson, Area Director, Spokane County Workforce Development Area
Employment Security Department
509.532.3033 | jodickson@esd.wa.gov