

STATUS UPDATE:

Retooling Washington Work Group #1: Coordinated Outreach to UI Exhaustees

UPDATED: March 10, 2011

Background

Washington State is facing the most severe recession since the Great Depression. At the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board's (WTECB) 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 are already providing services to this specific population, it became evident that coordinating efforts would be beneficial and provide valuable information to exhaustees.

Directive

The specific 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)."

Deliverables

The key deliverables are:

- 1) **Data** – provide regular exhaustee data reports to inform outreach efforts and service provision.
- 2) **Exhaustee Outreach Plan/Resource referral information for exhaustees**¹ – identify outreach goals & strategies for achieving those goals; provide resource referral information to exhaustees.
- 3) **Resource referral toolkits for service providers.**

Accomplishments to date and next steps

Below are the accomplishments for each of the three deliverables and next steps:

- 1) **Data** - regular exhaustee data reports to inform outreach efforts and service provision.

Accomplishments to date:

- Monthly exhaustee data is shared with both internal and external stakeholders, including WDC Executive Directors, ESD Area Directors, agency partners, the WTECB IC/Retooling Committee and key legislators. This data shows: Emergency Unemployment Compensation (EUC)/Extended Benefits (EB) claims and total exhaustions statewide and by county; exhaustee age, education, gender, occupation, industry, veterans and disability status statewide and by county.
- The most recent data is posted online at <http://www.wtb.wa.gov/UIExhaustreports.asp>. Users can access statewide data as well as county specific data.

Next steps:

- Continue to expand exhaustee data to help get a better understanding of the exhaustee population and to better inform local outreach and service efforts.

¹ Former deliverables two (Exhaustee Outreach Plan) + three (Resource Referrals for exhaustees) are now combined.

- Begin providing regular updates on exhaustee re-employment data.
- Continue to explore methodologies to project number (and location) of claimants likely to exhaust.
- Continue to communicate with local partners to identify whether there is additional data that can be provided to inform service delivery.
- Coordinate with WTECB to obtain statistics about exhaustee data website usage.

2) Exhaustee Outreach Plan/Resource referrals for exhaustees

Accomplishments to date:

Statewide

- 230,000 claimants who were about to exhaust all UI benefits received a one-page resource guide, which is a list of statewide resource referrals in December mailer.
- The resource guide is available online at www.esd.wa.gov [type “community resources” in the search box] and other state agency partner websites, including WTECB’s Retooling WA site. A survey is linked to the online resource guide to obtain feedback about the resource guide’s effectiveness. The online link to the survey has also been sent to partner agencies. Additionally, the survey and resource guide are currently being translated into Spanish; ESD is looking into translation into other languages.
- All providers on the resource guide have been contacted a second time. ESD confirmed contact information was still correct. It was also confirmed that providers were still comfortable being listed on the guide.
- ESD made modifications to the Telecenter script (customer service guide). The script now refers callers to the statewide resource guide and resources available through WorkSource.
- ESD’s Labor Market and Economic Analysis branch (LMEA) is exploring the feasibility of conducting a survey of exhaustees to inquire about their experience. This survey data would then inform future strategies of this workgroup.
- ESD established a new unit of employees and phone number just to handle questions from individuals about to exhaust emergency unemployment compensation (EUC). When individuals had questions about exhausting, they contacted this unit and were notified about the resource guide and WorkSource services.

Ongoing local efforts - Efforts to serve the long term unemployed and exhaustees continue at the local level. Below are just two examples:

- At WorkSource Colville, a plan was implemented to identify and direct veterans who are at risk of exhausting their unemployment benefits to appropriate intensive services. Staff connected with a tri-county effort called Stand Down. This organization served more than 1,400 veterans in 2010. WorkSource is now partnered with them to provide on-site employment services and referrals to other community resources.
- Mission Possible is just one new initiative at WorkSource in Pierce County. Mission Possible will provide people at risk of running out of extended unemployment-insurance benefits with the tools they need to get back to work quickly. (Extended UI benefits are the final tier of income support available to UI claimants.) Job seekers in Mission Possible will get individualized support to match their skills with local employers’ needs. Job seekers also will have the support of two new pilot programs:
 - You’re Hired! – Work sessions to help job seekers sell themselves to potential employers. WorkSource Business Services team members will bring the perspective of local businesses to activities such as résumé reviews, creating 60-second

“commercial” and mock interviewing.

- PowerHub – Interactive networking opportunity that brings job seekers face-to-face with business service specialists and employers. Discussions will focus on qualities employers seek when hiring and mistakes candidates make.

Next steps:

- Convene a sub-group with communications expertise and local perspectives to identify and evaluate state-agency resources and tools for communicating directly with the exhaustee population. Deliver findings to the full workgroup at the April 7 meeting. One option currently being explored is sending automated phone messages tailored by workforce area to EUC/UI claimants and exhaustees.
- Review sub-group findings and implement mechanisms to provide information to and obtain input from UI exhaustees.
- Identify effective and efficient mechanisms to capture local activities and share information about those activities, including success and barriers to success, both at local and state levels.
- Members of the workgroup will work with service providers at the local level to identify mechanisms to report on programs and services that do not cause undue burden and accurately capture activity.

3) Resource referral toolkits for service providers

Accomplishments to date:

The workgroup is sharing information with frontline staff in WorkSource offices statewide that are directly working with claimants who are exhausting or have exhausted all UI benefits. Some examples include the resource guide and other resources from local partners. Equally important is how the workgroup can support the frontline providers themselves:

- ESD offers a one-day class focusing on assessing and de-escalating angry, hostile and actual or potentially violent customers.
- ESD is developing a curriculum for a one-day class that will assist staff in identifying issues related to stress and time management while developing strategies to help meet their personal and/or professional challenges.
- ESD is partnering with DSHS, in particular DVR, to establish a process to refer to clients to DVR services when applicable. This may include an online assessment and instant referral to DVR office closest to the client.

Next steps:

- DSHS/DVR and ESD are exploring a partnership to use unspent ARRA federal funds (from DSHS) to provide motivational interviewing training to front line WS staff.
- Issue briefs for each WDA will be developed throughout March-August 2011 and will be shared with WTECB (on Retooling website) and system partners as they are developed.
- Data from frontline staff will be gathered to capture how and when claimants likely to exhaust are contacted to provide a point of reference for sub-group messaging activities.
- Frontline staff will continue to receive training targeted towards de-escalating angry, hostile customers and how to deal with intense, stressful situations.

Members

Members of this workgroup are comprised of staff from multiple state agencies that provide a diverse collection of services to exhaustees. Agencies 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 (WTECB)

Action Plan & Milestones

Milestone	Date
WTECB meeting – workgroup provided an update to the Board on progress to date.	January 27
ESD published and provided a regular update of monthly UI exhaustee data that includes demographic information at the state and local county levels.	January 28
ESD published and provided a regular update of monthly UI exhaustee data that includes demographic information at the state and local county levels. Data was posted to the WTECB Retooling web site.	February 28
Sub-group of workgroup met to identify effective communications mechanisms. Sub-group will provide update at next workgroup meeting.	March 4
A survey was developed to measure the effectiveness of the resource guide and is posted online with the resource guide www.esd.wa.gov [type in “community resources” into the search box]	March 7
ESD’s UI Telecenter script was updated to contain the resource guide information.	March 9
WTECB – workgroup will provide an update to the Board on progress to date.	March 10
Expand available exhaustee data; provide update to workgroup and link to WTECB web page (see data section for details).	April 1
WTECB – workgroup will provide an update to Board on progress, including six-month report to date.	May 5

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