

BRIEFLY...

September 26, 2017

PROGRAM SPECIFIC PERFORMANCE MEASURES ARE NEEDED TO BETTER EVALUATE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE RESEA PROGRAM

WHY OIG CONDUCTED THE AUDIT

Helping individuals receiving Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits find jobs more quickly while reducing UI improper payments is a priority for the Department of Labor's (DOL) Employment and Training Administration (ETA). DOL's Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 budget request seeks \$130 million for the Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) program, a \$15 million increase from FY 2017. RESEA provides participants with in-person assessments and reemployment services.

Beginning in FY 2019, DOL proposes permanent, mandatory funding for states to reach the following two groups: 1) one-half of eligible UI claimants identified as most likely to exhaust benefits; and 2) all ex-service members receiving unemployment compensation. To provide meaningful information on the impact of the RESEA program, it is critical that ETA establish valid performance measures.

WHAT OIG DID

We conducted a performance audit to determine the following:

Has ETA established performance measures to adequately assess the effectiveness of the RESEA program?

We evaluated program operations and design for the period April 2010 to December 2016.

READ THE FULL REPORT

To view the report, including the scope, methodology, and full agency response, go to: <http://www.oig.dol.gov/public/reports/oa/2017/04-17-002-03-315.pdf>

WHAT OIG FOUND

ETA has not established program specific performance measures it needs to adequately assess the impact of the RESEA program. ETA is transitioning to the use of the common performance measures specified in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), such as employment status in the second and fourth quarters after exiting the program. However, these measures do not compare RESEA participant outcomes to outcomes of other UI claimants and they do not specifically assess the impact of the RESEA program on its participants. According to ETA officials, they may consider capturing additional data elements to better inform how the program is performing.

Under the former Reemployment and Eligibility Assessments program, ETA could not fully assess outcomes and impacts because many states reported unreliable data. ETA officials acknowledged that some states continue to struggle with data quality. These data quality issues need to be addressed as ETA implements WIOA common measures for RESEA to ensure RESEA outcomes and impacts can be accurately measured.

WHAT OIG RECOMMENDED

We made four recommendations to the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Employment and Training to establish RESEA-specific performance measures, conduct periodic evaluations of RESEA outcomes, including a comparison of outcomes with the outcomes achieved by non-RESEA participants, and continue working with states to help them update their worker profiling models and provide accurate outcomes data.

ETA agreed with three of our four recommendations, but stated it did not believe additional measures beyond the WIOA common measures are needed.