

GAO
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Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-05-413](#), a report to Chairman, Subcommittee on Human Resources, Committee on Ways and Means, House of Representatives

Why GAO Did This Study

With unemployed workers at a greater risk of long-term unemployment than in the past, it is increasingly important to quickly connect Unemployment Insurance (UI) claimants with reemployment activities. However, the shift to remote claims filing in many states has raised concerns about maintaining a connection between the UI program and reemployment services. This report examines (1) the extent to which states have shifted to remote claims filing and how they are making claimants aware of program requirements and services, (2) what states are doing to facilitate reemployment of UI claimants, and (3) what is known about the extent to which UI claimants receive reemployment services and about their outcomes.

What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that the Department of Labor work with states to consider the feasibility of collecting more comprehensive information on UI claimants' services and outcomes. Labor generally agreed with GAO's findings, but took issue with the need for more comprehensive data, commenting that, in its view, current and planned data collection efforts will provide sufficient information to policy makers. However, none of Labor's efforts provide a complete picture of UI claimants' services and outcomes, which is key to good program management and is an important step in understanding the impact of Labor's programs.

www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-05-413.

To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on the link above. For more information, contact Sigurd Nilsen, (202) 512-7215, nilsens@gao.gov.

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Better Data Needed to Assess Reemployment Services to Claimants

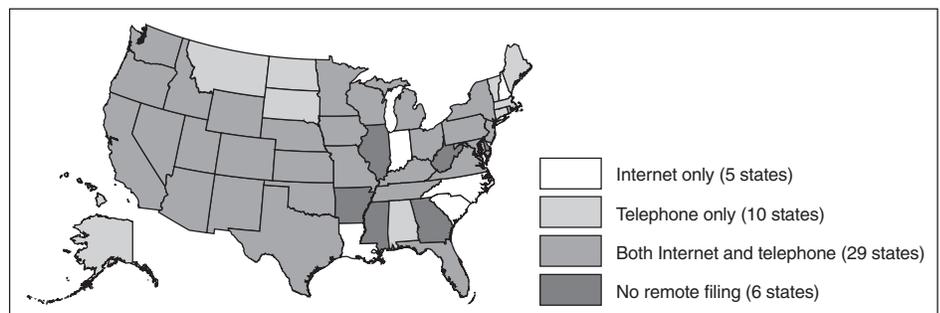
What GAO Found

Nearly all states accept most initial UI claims remotely by telephone, the Internet, or both. Even though claimants filing remotely no longer have face-to-face contact with UI staff at the time the claim is filed, all states told us they have found ways to provide information on eligibility requirements and reemployment services to individuals filing claims, such as by including this information in the scripts used by claims takers at UI call centers or as documents on Web pages. Officials from most states told us the shift to remote claims has not diminished their ability to provide information or deliver services to claimants. In fact, some report that this shift may have improved their ability to serve their customers.

Across states, claimants have access to a variety of reemployment services, and states make use of UI program requirements to connect claimants with available services at various points in their claim. All federally approved state UI programs require that claimants be able and available to work, and in many states these requirements also serve to link claimants to reemployment services. States also engage some claimants in reemployment services through programs that identify certain groups for more targeted assistance. States primarily target reemployment services to claimants identified as most likely to exhaust their UI benefits before finding work, through federally required claimant profiling programs.

Little is known about the extent to which claimants receive services from the broad array of programs designed to assist them or about the outcomes they achieve. States must meet a number of federal reporting requirements for their UI and employment and training programs, but none of these reports provides a complete picture of the services received or the outcomes obtained by UI claimants. GAO also found that few states monitor the extent to which claimants are receiving these services, and even fewer monitor outcomes for these claimants, largely due to limited information systems capabilities. Labor has some initiatives that may begin to shed light on claimant services and outcomes, but none will provide a complete picture.

Nearly All States Accept Initial UI Claims Remotely



Source: GAO analysis of data supplied by state officials in October and November 2004.