**WorkforceGPS**

**Transcript of Webinar**

**RESEA Program and TAA Program Connections**

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*Transcript by*

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LAURA CASERTANO: With that, I'm going to get myself right out of the way. Welcome, everyone, to today's "RESEA Program and TAA Program Connections" webinar, and I'm going to turn things over to your moderator today, Timothy Theberge. He's a senior policy analyst for the Office of Trade Adjustment Assistance with the U.S. Department of Labor. Timothy, take it away.

TIMOTHY THEBERGE: Thank you, Laura. All right. So good morning or good afternoon, depending on where you are joining us from today. My name is Tim Theberge. I am with the Office of Trade Adjustment Assistance. I will be your moderator for today's session.

We have three presenters lined up for you today. Lawrence Burns with our Office of Unemployment Insurance. He is a workforce development specialist with our agency. We also have Ellen Wright, who's also with the U.S. Department of Labor and also with the Office of Unemployment Insurance. The third speaker we have is our state practitioner, Beth Goguen, who is the Director of Central Programs for MassHire for the Department of Career Services with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

So those are your speakers for today. I'm going to serve in your role as moderator. If you have questions, please make sure you're entering those into the chat window. We will take those as best we can in real time during today's session, so we can make this as interactive as possible.

Please do complete those post-webinar surveys, evaluation forms when you get them. We actually do read those, and they're very helpful for us to make sure that we are providing you quality sessions via the GPS platform.

So what we're going to cover today, these are our learning objectives. It's really about all things RESEA and TAA so that people that may not be familiar with what our RESEA provides, how we can partner with TAA. We're going to hear again -- we're big fans of providing you real world solutions and real-world examples of how the things we taught are actually occurring. And so, that's going to be the Massachusetts presentation from from my long-term colleague Beth. And then we're going to learn about some additional resources for RESEA from our national office folks over at the Office of Unemployment Insurance.

So what's happening in the Trade world? So for those of you in the Trade world, you know that we are currently operating under what we call a period of reversion. That went into effect in July 1 of 2021 for new new petitions that are filed on or after that date.

So we have some participants receiving services under the 2015 version of the statute. We have some participants now receiving services under the reversion form of that program. And so, that creates some additional complications for you at the state level. And we are anxiously awaiting to see if reauthorization is included in any of the stuff that's currently moving through Congress. So that's sort of what's happening in the Trade world.

What we want to show you by way of introduction to the Trade program is a video that we have that one of the states put together and was modified for us so that we can share you this resource for what's out there relative to an introduction to Trade in short video format. Yes. This is from Arizona who provided it to us and then even modified the ending so we could make it generic for you all. So. Laura, go ahead and play that for everyone, if you would.

All right. Thank you, Laura, for putting that up for us.

So again, thank you to Arizona who originally produced that video, and thank you for them for editing the end of that so that it was generic. That is available on our website, if you would like to link to it from yours. If you don't have a state specific one, feel free to do that.

Having said that, so why Trade and RESEA? So there are very similar demographic factors between individuals that are enrolled in the TAA program and those that are often identified and then enrolled in the RESEA. And that is that they tend to be older.

So for example, I believe the average -- I think it -- maybe it's the median age of a Trade worker for the last fiscal year was 51 years of age; right? So these are older workers. They are -- the majority of them have no education beyond high school. They have significantly longer periods of tenure with their previous employer than the average American worker. It's about twice as long, and they often have narrower skill sets. Not surprisingly, that then also seems to reflect a lot of the individuals that are in or are appropriate for the RESEA program.

What we know about those factors and anyone that's been involved in this business for any amount of time knows that each of those is a barrier to reemployment and, oftentimes, a single worker actually has all four of these factors. And so, that's why we think there's a lot to be gained here by working with these two programs.

So sort of how did we get here, and how did we decide that we would look at this particular issue? So in the Office of Trade Adjustment Assistance, we are lucky to have really good access to all of the data that you all report to us via the PIRL, via the individualized record that states submit to us each quarter. And we look at that data fairly regularly to see what else can we learn from what's being reported to us.

So the element we looked at is field 401, and this is the unemployment claimant eligible status. I'm not going to read to you all of those that are on the screen, but you can go dig that up if you want to get into the nuance of that. But essentially, what we're looking for and what to know is, are these individuals claimants or not? Are they an exhaustee? Did they -- were they referred by RESEA? Where they referred by the WPRS, the worker profiling system; right? Or neither or are they exempt?

So what we're interested in is to see how people are coming into the program and what those sources are, where those connections are from the UI program. So then we look at the data.

So what we know and one of the things that we track is whether or not people have received rapid response or other services. So the fact that some 37 percent or so report that they are neither a claimant nor exhaustee when they come into our program, at least on face value, suggests that states are doing a phenomenal job of enrolling people before they ever even file a UI claim.

Now, that suggests, at least, that there are good efforts being made in the world of rapid response. Whether that's true or not -- right -- is one of those questions we don't know the answer to, but this is something where we're looking at.

Then you can see the breakdown by each of the next data sets in terms of one, which is RESEA, that drops down to about 12 percent. The next is your WPRS, your worker profiling folks. That one's under 10 percent. Your next biggest group are people that are actually claimants; right? And so, you'll see that this is on par with the folks that the -- aren't either claimants or exhaustees, a very small percentage that are exhaustees, and then the claimant is exempt.

So what we have done -- and if you've been paying attention in Trade, what we do all the time is look at these data sets, look at an element and say, gee, that's interesting. I wonder how accurate that data is.

We will then reach out to a couple of states to sort of do some spot checking, if you will, of why does the data look like that? How accurate do you think this data is, and what story is it telling us?

So this is definitely something that we're going to continue to explore. We may contact a few of you individual states to dive into this data and say, wow. Is it really true that a third of your people are being enrolled in our program before they're even a UI claimant? Which, if that's true, that's fantastic because that's what the data is telling us. And so, this is the types of questions that will come from this.

And then the other thing we want to do is look at those ones where we think there might be an opportunity for some additional leveraging of system resources. And one of those things is around RESEA and how that can work with Trade.

So we're going to put up another poll question for you here. And the question on this poll is, what level of integration between RESEA and Trade is in your state? So you'll now see that poll go up, and you've got a couple of options here. The first is none to my knowledge. The second is that it's informal. The next option is that there are formal. So this is going to include actual standard operating procedures, electronic file sharing, the WIOA famous answer that it varies from local to local, and that you're not sure. Obviously, all of these answers are valid and will help drive some of the discussion.

As a reminder, if you have questions, please put those into the main chat, and we will try to answer those as best we can in real time during today's session.

So it looks like most of you have answered at this point, the number one answer being that the integration that does exist is largely informal and that that's largely a person-to-person communication with none to my knowledge slightly beating out not sure. So I'm going to combine those two, although I guess the answer none to my knowledge is a little bit different than not sure. Only 6 percent indicating that there's any type of formal practices in place.

So our hope is that we at least increase the informal part after today's session, if not a more formal agreement or operation between the different programs. All right.

So with that, let's stop and check. I don't see any questions that have come in yet into the chat. So again, please feel free to enter them over there, and we will answer them as we go along. Hearing none, seeing none, I'm going to hand it over to Larry Burns from the Office of Unemployment Insurance for the overview of the RESEA program. Larry.

Lawrence Burns: Thanks, Tim, and I'm very happy to be here and very grateful for the invite from our colleagues over in the Trade office to join and kind of introduce some people to RESEA.

I know a lot of you may know a lot about it or actually work on it. But what we wanted to do is kind of set the stage and put everybody on the same footing and kind of just give a little context about what RESEA is and then dive down a little bit deeper into some areas where RESEA and the Trade programs could potentially work together or better integrate. So with that, I'm just going to kick off and do kind of a high-level introduction to RESEA and talk about what it looks like.

So one of the things about RESEA is for what seemed like forever, at least until the '70s, there's always been some sort of reemployment initiative in the UI world. So you can go back pretty far and find all kinds of different versions of programs that were trying to get UI claimants back into the workforce quickly. But one of the things for RESEA, its history really starts in 2005.

So we're based on a program called Reemployment and Eligibility Assessments, and that was a program that was first developed in Nevada where they found that really the magic sauce of reemployment was combining both UI integrity efforts with reemployment services and that when you combined those, the program actually resulted in some pretty impressive cost savings to the UI system.

So we started playing with that and trying to get other states to adopt that model for several years and kind of trying to spread REA into a national program.

In 2015, we revisited REA and we expanded it a bit and we rebranded it as Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessments. We call it RESEA. Some states may call it RSEA, but in 2015, what we did is we tried to take the REA model and really expand the reemployment aspect of the program. REA was really a program that referred participants to other services.

However, what RESEA did is we tried to include more reemployment services. So during the RESEA meetings -- and we're going to talk a lot more about what the services look like in just another slide or two, but what we tried to do is, as part of RESEA, is allow reemployment service to be provided as part of the actual program or to reimburse our partner programs for some of the reemployment costs that may come directly from RESEA.

So for example, if someone comes in to meet with an RESEA staff person and that person refers them to a resume writing workshop that's done by Wagner-Peyser Employment Service staff, an ability to reimburse ES for those costs.

One of the big things that we've done recently is, due to some changes in the authorization for RESEA that happened in 2018, RESEA was even further expanded. So from 2015 to 2018, RESEA was a small discretionary program, kind of a creature of the annual appropriations. But in 2018, there were some amendments to the Social Security Act, which created a permanent authorization for RESEA and also a lot of significant changes to the program.

So really, what I'm going to be doing is talking about some of those changes and what they look like and what they mean moving forward.

So before I get into that, one of the big things I want to just set the stage on is what is the purpose of our RESEA.? And for us, it's pretty easy to talk about that because our statute, the authorization in the Social Security Act defines the four objectives for the RESEA program, the first of which is to improve employment outcomes of individuals that receive unemployment compensation and to reduce average duration of receipt of such compensation through employment.

I know that's kind of -- has a very legalese sound to it, but one of the key things I wanted to emphasize about this first objective is you see the word employment several times. RESEA is really a reemployment program, and that's the way the department views it. There's all kinds of integrity aspects and other parts of the program, but at its core, we view this as being a reemployment program, and that's actually now in our statute and our permanent authorization.

We're also designed to strengthen program integrity. I'm going to talk about services, but one of the key services we provide is an eligibility assessment to make sure people that we -- that come into RESEA are actually still eligible for UI benefits and to flag issues to the UI staff as needed.

But also, we're intended to promote the alignment with the vision of WIOA. So integration, coordination, kind of that one-stop vision that WIOA had is also a core component of RESEA, and we're doing a lot more to try to emphasize that. And one of the reasons why we're here talking with our folks and colleagues over in Trade is to kind of help promote that vision because I know we all have the same objective of meeting it.

And the last goal is to establish RESEA as an entry point to other workforce system partners. Currently, we're an entry point most common to the Wagner-Peyser Employment Service, also WIOA dislocated worker, but we also see that the connection between Trade.

One of the things about this entry point that we just want to clarify is that RESEA is not intended to be kind of a standalone program. We're really intended to be a gateway and to connect people to other services and to supplement rather than supplant those services. So we're not designed to be a standalone program. We get people in the door. We kind of do some initial assessments and refer them to the services that will be beneficial to them.

But those are the four objectives, and everything we do in RESEA, our strategic planning, our service design, our evaluations, our research, everything we do has to link back to these four objectives and goals.

So what does RESEA look like? So one of the things about RESEA, and I'm going to talk a little bit about how people are selected for RESEA first, and then I'll talk a little bit about the services.

So generally speaking, what happens is after someone opens a UI claim, the UI system runs some sort of statistical model. It can be in a regression analysis. It can be a characteristic screen, but this model is intended to identify people that are going to have difficulty returning to work, are more likely to exhaust benefits, and also would benefit from reemployment services.

So usually, what happens is, after someone opens the claim, at the earliest it's usually four or five weeks into the claim before they get that notification. So some people may already have contacts with the workforce system either through rapid response or through Wagner-Peyser. But we try to be an early intervention program, but the earliest that usually is is about four or five weeks, typically. Sometimes it's a little bit later, sometimes a little earlier, but that's the average.

And what happens if that claimant receives a notification? Now, RESEA is a voluntary program for states. Currently, we have all but two states operating RESEA programs. But when you're operating an RESEA program within your state, that program is a requirement for UI participants. So if somebody is subject to that model and gets that notification, they have to come in and receive services.

And generally, what the initial set of those services is a first meeting. We call it the initial meeting where you're going to get a UI eligibility assessment to see if you are actually eligible for UI, whether there's work search issues or other things that may be a problem that need to be flagged for UI staff to look into. You're also going to get labor market information that's customized to the claimant's needs.

You're going to be co-enrolled in Wagner-Peyser Employment Services. This is really key for Wagner -- for RESEA right now because we share some of the same infrastructure when it comes to performance. You're also going to get support with the individual reemployment plan. So that could be either sitting down at that meeting and developing a plan or shortly thereafter doing a workshop or some other tool to develop a reemployment plan. And then you're also going to get information and referrals to other services.

Most states also offer a subsequent -- not all states, but the majority do offer follow-up sessions to RESEA. And for those, the minimum requirements are a UI eligibility assessment and then a review of your work search or individual reemployment plan. The vast majority of states now do subsequent. That seems to be something that RESEA is moving towards is doing more and more follow-up services to that initial meeting.

A few things I just want to note here. I already mentioned RESEA is voluntary for states to participate but required for participants once an RESEA is up and running. But a few other things we've done is to try to promote alignment and that vision of WIOA. In the UI world, we tend to use the term reemployment services quite a bit. It's in our legislation. I think Wagner-Peyser also uses it.

What we've tried to do with RESEA is to clarify what we mean by reemployment services by aligning and using the WIOA definition of career services. So that was one of the key things that we've done to RESEA to try to make that alignment happen.

So I want to talk just briefly about some of the new requirements that we're going through with RESEA and the permanent authorization that happened in 2018. First of all, before I do that, I just want to go back to the previous slide and mention one important thing.

Just to clarify, these services are a minimum level of services. So this is the bare bones that RESEA has to include. The vast majority of states do a lot more and offer a lot more reemployment services as part of the session. So I just wanted to make that clear that this is the minimum requirement to be counted as an RESEA.

So for the new requirements, a few things that kicked in in 2018 that are pretty big for our program is, first, there's the required use of evidence-based strategies and evaluations.

So starting in 2018 with that new legislation, we're required that all activities and interventions funded by RESEA be linked to evidence, that their evidence-based. Currently, we're using evidence from the REA program, but we have a massive investment and a series of technical assistance and other resources to develop new information and new evaluations for RESEA. So all of our states are currently doing some sort of evaluation activities to develop the evidence base so we can get away from REA studies and start using RESEA specific evidence in the future.

In 2023, we -- this requirement actually gets amped up a little bit, and we have to show that a percentage of RESEA funding is going not only to evidence-based interventions but interventions that have a higher moderate causal rating. So we actually have very rigorous evidence supporting it. That's been a big change for our program. A lot of work, and what we've really been focusing on for the past couple years is to build up that evidence base.

We also have increased discretion in participation of selection of participants. In the past under REA and RESEA, we were limited just to those likely to exhaust. And also, we serve transitioning service members, so people receiving a special type of UI benefit called UCX, which is just for those leaving the military.

What has happened over the past couple years is that Congress has opened the flexibility to include any regular UI claimant. That does not include special programs like extended benefits or, more recently, the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance. So it's only open to regular UI benefits.

We've also transitioned starting in fiscal year 2021 to formula funding. We used to be operating like a discretionary grant and that the amounts kind of fluctuated quite a bit. And also, we have a -- our own independent state plan process that's separate from the WIOA state plan. We'll talk a little bit about that in a second.

So I'm just going to highlight two of the changes, just because I think these are the most significant for our work across the RESEA and Trade program. So one of the things, as Tim really clearly put, there's a lot of overlap between RESEA and Trade in the participants we serve.

One of the things that is changing with RESEA is that we have opened the door to states to target more claimants. So currently, when you look at national numbers pre-pandemic, RESEA served about 30 percent nationwide of UI participants, and we anticipate that number to grow substantially in the years ahead.

One of the other things I just wanted to clarify for people in the states is that there are two different programs in the Social Security Act that do reemployment services. There's RESEA now, and there's also the Worker Profiling and Reemployment Service, or WPRS.

WPRS is kind of a lighter touch service, and what it does is it has a statistical model, just like RESEA uses, that identifies claimants likely to exhaust, brings them in, and just does some referrals. It doesn't include the whole wide range of services RESEA does. The vast majority of states, almost all of them, use RESEA to meet WPRS requirements. But there can be instances where a state may be operating RESEA in some areas and WPRS in others or may not be operating RESEA currently and is operating WPRS.

So I just wanted to clarify that these two programs can exist, and in some cases, most cases RESEA takes the place of WPRS, but in other instances, you may have both programs operating in your state. And I thought that was important because it's had a lot of confusion about that in the past.

The other thing I wanted to mention is funding outlook. As I mentioned, one of the big things for RESEA is we transitioned from a discretionary program to more of a formula based. And our permanent authorization in the Social Security Act and also the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018 included some authorized funding levels for us. So this is basically the outlook from 2020 to 2027. In 2020 and 2021, we actually did get the authorized level of the full amount.

So I know authorized levels don't mean a lot because it still requires annual appropriations. But if you see here, there's a little bit of a breakdown between base and cap. So since RESEA has such significant cost savings associated with it, we have something in our authorization called a cap adjustment. So each year, when Congress sets discretionary cap levels for what they can spend on programs such as RESEA, there's an amount of extra funding and that's that cap adjustment that reflects savings from the program.

So what happens is, when states -- when Congress appropriates funds for RESEA, the only thing that shows up against that discretionary cap is the base, which is $117 million. That additional adjustment reflects savings and isn't cost against those discretionary caps. So it actually creates a little bit of an incentive to keep funding RESEA. And we do hope it keeps growing and growing because eventually we'd like to get to the point where all claimants receive RESEA services.

And again, we switched to a formula. So the way the formula works is it's based on each state's insured unemployment rate and also the size of its civilian labor force. So those are the main factors that drive the formula. We also have some other factors that help stabilize funding from year to year.

One of the other big changes to try to support that vision of WIOA is we've adopted the WIOA measures for RESEA. In particular, our primary reemployment measure is reemployment rate in the second quarter after program exit. That is our main indicator of performance for RESEA. We also have, as a management measure, just for TA purposes and tracking, we also look at earnings in the second quarter after program exit.

The way we currently capture that information is using Wagner-Peyser. Since all RESEA participants must be co-enrolled in Wagner-Peyser, we use that 401 element to identify RESEA participants and pull the data from the WIOA system and do our analysis for performance purposes for RESEA.

And one of the things we've been doing over the past two years is really working closely with Wagner-Peyser to make sure that their reporting of the 401 element was correct. And now, we're starting to work with other partners such as Trade, also looking at those same elements and taking some of the lessons we learned to see what we can find out.

But this transition was a pretty big one. We view RESEA as a reemployment program, and we wanted to align our measures with all the other reemployment programs under WIOA. So that's why we've made that change rather than using standalone REA -- REA or RESEA reports like we did in the past. So this is a pretty significant change for RESEA.

And what I wanted to do is just wrap up briefly and talk a little bit about some of the opportunities for alignment and integration because I think there's quite a few.

So one of the things -- and I've mentioned this earlier on -- is that RESEA is a more flexible and also, more importantly, a permanent program. It's no longer just this kind of initiative that's a creature of appropriations. We have a permanent structure to it. So states are starting to staff up RESEA and really develop it and roll it into their broader reemployment strategy moving forward.

We do serve similar populations. I think there's a lot of overlap. We are really promoting integration of RESEA across WIOA and all the other partners that work with WIOA and supporting co-enrollment of RESEA participants where it makes sense.

We've also had a big change. One of the things that was a real change for us in response to the pandemic was switching over to more virtual and remote services. In the past, in the early days of RESEA and under all of REA, we required all services to be done in person at an AJC. In 2017, we started giving more flexibility to allow alternative locations like colleges or -- colleges, libraries, other places to do that. And some of the components could be done online.

But now, all of the services can be done remotely, and that's a flexibility that we've kept going into the current year. And the benefit of that is that RESEA is now becoming more and more common to be statewide. It used to be hard to do RESEA services in some of the more rural areas, but RESEA is becoming more and more available due to those changes.

And also, we've moved towards common definitions and performance measures so we're all speaking the same language.

Some of the limitations. The big ones for us is we have an annual state plan. We would really love to be able to align our state plan with the WIOA state plan and that time scale, and that's something we're kind of looking at moving forward.

But I think one of the biggest challenges across TAA and RESEA is the timing. For RESEA, it's intended to be an early intervention. We try to get claimants in the door as early as possible, and we don't keep them over a very long period of time. We do our initial work, and then we hand over the participants and transition them to WIOA or Wagner-Peyser most often.

So I know with the Trade program, it tends to come in a little bit later in the claimant's cycle within the workforce system. And also, we have this requirement that we're intended to supplement and not supplant. So that's something we work under.

So with all that being said, I thought I would just kind of conclude this overview by providing you guys with a few just high-level areas of where alignment can happen.

First of all, one of the things, as I mentioned with that different time schedule, is that RESEA is probably seeing these individuals a lot earlier than Trade may see them. So as these people are coming in, we try to make RESEA a really good resource that's knowledgeable about all the different programs and activities. So having communication between Trade and the RESEA system about what companies may have certifications or what's going on in the Trade world might help the RESEA program identify claimants as they come in and make sure they have the information they need to move forward.

Also, on the other end, RESEA starts doing work with some of these people that may end up being in the Trade program later on. So having some sort of procedure for transferring that individual employment plan and all the other work that's been done to the Trade participant -- the Trade program will help kind of make it a more seamless one stop WIOA vision of an integrated service delivery. So having communication between the two programs both at the front and back end I think is really key.

Also, being involved in strategic planning. The RESEA annual state plans, the WIOA state plans, making sure that everybody's having communications and kind of aligning their plans to reflect this integrated service delivery.

Cross-training is always super helpful and a good practice and also having data and -- data and other funding agreements or whatever other agreements or SOPs you need to have that integrated service delivery in place is also key.

So those are some of the examples of alignment. I think with that, we'll be moving on to the next poll question. And also, while we're doing that, I believe Tim will be gathering up some more questions.

MR. THEBERGE: Thank you, Larry. Yes. We're going to put our next poll up. We have one question so far that I see. So while you answer that in for -- those polls that are up there, let me look and see.

It says, "Can we provided a copy of these slides?" Yes. Amanda, they are available. There's a little pod right there that was just made larger by Laura that says File Share. That is today's presentation -- excuse me -- presentation that you can download directly from there.

Yeah. Melissa, yes. Correct. So that's a good observation that there are -- Melissa points out that there are individuals that are laid off prior to certification and after. There are even those that are laid off prior to the petition ever being being filed. Remember, we go back a year. So if you file a petition today, our -- that becomes the impact date, and so individuals will -- the investigators will look back a year from today, so much so that those individuals that are laid off, even if that far back, can be later enrolled in the program. But that's a very good point.

And so, what we think there might be are a lot of individuals who are actually laid off and served through our partner agencies long before a petition is even filed, never mind eventually certified. So that's why, again, we're interested to see where that data -- how real that data is because that's what we're looking at here. And so, if they're neither a claimant nor an exhaustee, are those 30 percent truly the people that are coming in prior to layoff and/or vice versa? There was another whole population that didn't come in through our RESEA. And so, who are those; right?

So thank you to those answering the poll. We'll leave that up for another -- a minute. Make sure you all get that in there because, again, even from Trade's perspective, remember, all of our programs are designed to be reemployment programs. Our primary goal as an agency is to make sure people get reemployed, ideally as as quickly as possible after a layoff and ideally before they even have to file a UI claim; right?

That's the ultimate goal of our entire system is to completely avert that layoff, but when we can't, to make sure we're minimizing that period of unemployment as much as possible.

So for TAA staff: at the point of TAA participation, do you have a flag that checks UI status?

So we have the majority or the plurality are not sure. 18 percent say they are asking about the RESEA referral, and the other one is, no. This is completed by another program, e.g., Wagner-Peyser.

So again, I think this always highlights to me one of those questions or one of those amazing visuals of just how many ways you can end up in our system in terms of a workforce system. Do you come in through that UI claim? Is that your first point of contact? Is your first point of of contact from rapid response? Is your first point of contact from a letter you got from the profiling people or the RESEA people to come in? Or is the first time you've heard of our program from Trade; right? Those are those are all different pathways in.

We would encourage the 39 individuals that answered they weren't sure to this poll to follow up after this webinar and find out. This is one of those data points that we think there's a lot to mine from and to have some good conversations around how all of this really comes together.

And to really talk about that, what we want to do now, because we're very big fans of providing you real-world examples of stuff and not just speaking to you as talking feds, as we are often called; right? And so, part of our responsibility is to provide you real-world solutions that are working out there for you; right? That are real-time things.

So what I want to do now is move on to Beth Goguen from Massachusetts, from MassHire from the Department of -- I forget the current name of your agency because it's changed in the last 23 years. But MassHire, it's a short version. And Beth is a long-time collaborator of mine. We've known each other for my entire career at ETA, and we have often highlighted some of the stuff that Massachusetts has done.

This is another scenario where we think there is some real-world opportunity for you all to learn from another state, from a fellow practitioner in how these programs can work together. So with that, I'm going to turn it over to Beth. Thank you. Department of Career Services, says my former colleague of the Boston Regional Office. Thank you, Carmen. Take it away, Beth, maybe, if she can unmute. Did we lose Beth?

MS. CASERTANO: Beth, you might need to hit \*6 on your line to unmute yourself.

BETH GOGUEN: OK. I was using the button, but I just did \*6. So I think you can hear me now.

MR. THEBERGE: We can. You sound great.

MS. GOGUEN: OK.

MR. THEBERGE: Take it away, Beth.

MS. GOGUEN: Great. Thank you, Tim. Thank you. So thank you, everybody, from DOL for inviting me to model how Massachusetts is working together with -- as far as integration, cross-training, and maximizing our resources. We are part of the only 6 percent from that initial poll that does integrate our programs on a number of levels, which I'll go through today. And hopefully, I can share what has worked for Massachusetts as you are moving forward and looking for your opportunities of integration.

So I think, Tim, you were going to speak to this first before I got going.

MR. THEBERGE: You are absolutely correct. So thank you, Beth. I apologize for that.

So we're going to get back to that data set that we talked about earlier on where you saw in that PIRL field 401. This is individuals referred by RESEA. What we saw nationally was a rate of 11.4 percent. Yet here in Massachusetts, it's 36.8; right? So when you have a state that's that divergent from what the national average is or the national outcome is, this is where we start to ask the questions of why is that? And if that was real, which based on our conversations with Beth, we know it to be real, is that an outlier or does that reflect really what the rest of those results should be if people are operating some type of similar program or similar setup?

So when we look at that data, we are always looking for outliers. So an example would be we are very interested in customized training that occurs in workforce development. And every now and then, we find some states that report staggering numbers of customized training, and yet we dig into that only to discover that, oh, no. Some of those were coded wrong. They're not really customized training or whatever the similar outcome might be.

Apprenticeships is another one that often gets labeled as an apprenticeship for a type of training that really isn't.

But what we have here appears to be very real. And so, when we find those outliers that are very real and we believe represents a model that can be replicated and a model that's working, that's when we want to highlight it. And so, that's why you're seeing Massachusetts present here today is because of this very real data from the Commonwealth that is significantly higher than what's reported by the rest of the states. And now, I yield over to Beth.

MS. GOGUEN: Thank you. OK. So first, I just wanted to demonstrate how in Massachusetts we have established a framework for a customer flow for all of our customers. It does not matter whether the customer is WIOA, Trade, RESEA, a referral from one of our partner programs. The customer comes into our system. They register in Job Quest, which is our state -- the front facing part of our state database.

They complete a CCS, which stands for Career Center Seminar, which is a brief overview of all of the services that are provided at a American Job Center. The career centers have their individual CCSs, which we provide a framework for topics that must be covered in the CCS, and then they can provide individualized pieces of their PowerPoints or however they're delivering their CCS. But we do provide the framework for that so that it is standard across the state. And again, like I said, it gives an overview to the customer of what the standard services are at our career centers.

They also start a individual needs assessment as part of that CCS. And then they are connected with somebody at the career center. And with RESEA, they will end with any of our other programs. It doesn't matter if they're going to be going down a job search path or a training path as part of their road to reemployment. They will need a resume, of course. They need to do labor market research. They get referrals to other reemployment services, and they start different types of assessments, whether they are personality assessments, reading and writing assessments, what have you. It can be any type of assessment which is going to help them in the end to gain employment.

And then the yellow highlight of reviewing their UI eligibility is something that is just a little bit different for RESEA customers. But all in all, the same pathway is -- what I wanted to demonstrate here was it is our customer flow for all of our customers, no matter what program.

So in RESEA for Massachusetts, we just outlined what key components are of our RESEA program. We enroll up to 2,000 first-time UI payments, people who are receiving first-time UI payments. They receive a notification letter. They attend the CCS. We also -- I skipped over our welcome letters after they receive a notice from our Department of Unemployment Assistance. They also get a letter -- an email -- excuse me -- from MassHire Department of Career Services, which welcomes them to the career center and invites them to contact a career center to start their RESEA requirements.

Again, they attend the CCS. If they have attended a CCS before they were enrolled in RESEA, we do waive the CCS, but they do need to complete all the other elements of our RESEA program.

They are also sent reminder emails and calls. We are required to do follow up to make sure that they are notified of all the requirements under RESEA so that they do not get sanctions because at various -- two different points in the RESEA process, their benefits can be stopped.

Again, they're being provided referrals to appropriate reemployment services, depending on what their pathway entails, and they attend a RESEA review and this is usually by -- or this is by week five. And if they have good cause, they can reschedule to week six. And again, there are sanctions associated. So we want to make sure we do all that we can to ensure that somebody isn't sanctioned. They get a one-week sanction if they haven't attended the CCS by their third week -- their third week after their first payment. Excuse me. And they're indefinitely sanctioned if they do not complete all of the RESEA requirements by week five.

Again, this is just a different view of our -- of the workflow for our RESEA customers. I just have it in here mainly so that you can refer back to it if you are keeping the -- if you download the PowerPoint.

And here is where I wanted to show how TAA is integrated into our framework for our customer flow. So as you can see, it is the same customer flow, except if you're identified as Trade, when you maintain that first contact with a career center staff person, they are reviewing if your company is TAA certified.

So we also send out to all the staff in the career center a monthly update listing all of the TAA certifications around the state, as well as -- and that list, actually, also includes any NW -- National Dislocated Worker Grants that we have around the state so that it can be used as a desk guide when they're checking employment to see if they are Trade eligible.

If they are identified as being Trade at that point, they can be referred to another staff person to file their eligibility, or that staff person may be the person who files their TAA eligibility, because as we're going to -- as I'm going to speak about in a few minutes, we have a lot of cross-training and integration within our staff at the one-stop career centers.

And as you can also see, the second green bubble I'll skip down to, they submit the -- their training requests to the MassHire Department of Career Services. So in Massachusetts, someone would go through the same process in preparing for their training, researching the labor market, making sure they can meet the six criteria. And instead of the contract with the training vendor being done at the local level, it is sent into our state electronically through our one-stop system, our case management database.

And then on the job search side. If somebody's pathway was job search, then they would also be looking at ATAA, RTAA, job search allowances, and these can all be intertwined depending on where somebody is on the pathway.

So some of our best practices that I wanted to speak about. So again, as I was introduced, my title is Central Programs Director. I do oversee many programs, not only WATSE [ph] and the Foreign Labor Certification Program, but I oversee the RESEA program as well as the TAA program. And it doesn't help -- or it does help -- excuse me -- that I am the liaison with our Department of Unemployment Assistance.

So that role assists me in being able to identify with our central staff and staff within the career centers opportunities that we have to identify each other's customers and provide the benefits and services that they need, any gaps in our programs where we can tighten up things and help each other, again, best practices and where we can do away with duplication.

So a -- excuse me. A career action plan or a needs assessment that is done in one part of the customer flow, if you're, for example, RESEA at that moment, should be utilized as you move through your pathway to reemployment and be used in helping to identify and make you eligible for Trade program services. There should not be a need to do two career action plans or two different needs assessments just because you're sitting with two different staff. We should all share the work that the customer is doing and make their experience seamless and easy.

So we do a lot of cross-training with all the staff at the -- at our American Job Centers. We invite them to all the different trainings, whether it's about Title I, whether it's about TAA, whether it's about RESEA, whether it's about career planning. We want to show them the similarities between our programs and how there are just little differences that we can take into account as the customer is going through that reemployment pathway.

Our RESEA model does help with the customer flow. So our customer flow and we built our RESEA program into our customer flow so that what they were doing matched the pattern of how somebody -- we expect somebody to be able to flow through the services as they are making a decision on whether their ultimate pathway is that they need training or whether that they are ready to do job search and apply for jobs right away.

Again, like I said, our -- we want to optimize our business services. We're always looking to reduce costs and bottlenecks for the customer and make their experience pleasant as they work through their reemployment pathway.

And we have a really strong partnership with our DUA partner, our Department of Unemployment Assistance. We meet biweekly with them on not only RESEA topics but also on just general UI issues. And we just try to make sure that there is clear communication coming from both of our agencies out to the staff who are working with the customers because the customer's benefit status also plays an integral role in how their reemployment pathway is going to work out.

And next, I'm going to show you our integrated budget of how we do that on the financial side. So at the MassHire Department of Career Services, we have what we call an integrated budget, which is part of our local plans that we require of all of the areas, all -- we have 16 boards and 25 comprehensive American Job Centers and 4 affiliates. So everyone is required to submit an integrated budget. And what is that?

That is a budget that includes all of their different funding allocations, whether it be RESEA, Trade, WIOA, any of the funding for infrastructure from our partners. It all goes on their integrated budget. They are also provided the staffing. If they're a state staff at the career center, they're provided those costs, and then they're able to budget the state staff as well as the partner staff. Whether it's -- whether that partner staff is a city worker or a nonprofit, it doesn't matter.

They put all the staff on the integrated budget, and they're able to cost allocate out across the programs for the staff so that staff can -- are not siloed into working on one program, that they truly are integrated and they're funded by the various funding sources that are available. That way, we're also able to leverage the staff across multiple programs.

So some of our challenges or opportunities, I would say, first, one of our opportunities was that we had investment from all the way at the top. So our Secretary of Labor to our -- the director on both the unemployment side as well as the director of MDCS, they have a vision all the way at the top, and that trickles down to an operational level. So with their leadership, we were able to really have the vision of integrating and having this unified framework for our customers to go through the career center.

When we're rolling out cross-training and such, we find commonalities and efficiencies, and we focus on those with the staff so that they can see that there are many commonalities between our programs. I think different programs, different missions is a misconception. We're all working towards common measures. We're all working with a single customer that needs to become reemployed. So we all have that common goal for our customer, which is ultimately to get employment.

The lack of program knowledge. Like I said, we do provide a lot of cross-training to our staff. We roll out training on all of our different programs at least once a year so that various staff can participate when they're able to. We have new staff, always. There's always some turnover. And so, we want to make sure that all of the staff have all the knowledge across all of the programs.

It also creates a better working environment because everybody's at the same level. We have had agencies that have come in to run some of our -- when they had to go out and procure the American Job Centers, we had different agencies that came in to run the services at the career center, and they aligned their job descriptions to some of the state job descriptions.

So we -- I'm sorry. I'll back up because at the state level we took all of our what we call the job specialists, and we reviewed those job descriptions against what we wanted to give, which was a title of employment counselor. And we made a few tweaks to those job descriptions. Everyone got a little bit of an upgrade and a little bit of a raise, and then the partners came in and they also aligned their job descriptions to our then employment counselors.

So everybody was on the same page. Everybody was able to do the same work because everybody basically had the same job description and were being cross-trained and were able to serve the customer. And we felt that to be important also because, when a customer comes in, as many of us know, they're scared. They don't know where to start.

And establishing that relationship right up front, as you saw in our RESEA program, they're coming in. They get enrolled in RESEA after their first payment. So that's hopefully close to the third week after they filed. And so, we -- we're trying to grab them early and having -- letting them stay with that one counselor and work their way through their path to reemployment helps to establish that trust and help them back to getting employment.

I would also just add that having a -- once our MOSES system, which is our one-stop employment system, also assists us in integrating all of our programs together because everybody is being tracked in the same database. The Trade program goes through MOSES. The RESEA program goes through MOSES. WIOA goes through MOSES. So everyone is able to see the different benefits and services that somebody is getting as they go through. All right. So that is what I have.

MR. THEBERGE: Thanks, Beth. All right. So now, we have another one of our -- oh, go ahead.

Great. So we have another poll. Laura, do we have this one as a poll set up? Yes. We do. Great. There it is.

So this is specifically for the RESEA staff that we have on today's session. So TAA staff, restrain yourselves. Are RESEA staff aware of TAA applications or other related activities that might affect participants? And so, here your options are no. There is no intersection. Yes. There is one or more procedures. Yes. RESEA and Trade are operated by the same agency, or not sure. So again, this is for the RESEA staff that are on today's session to be able to weigh in here and let us know where things stand.

Give you another minute or so for this one. And again, please remember to put any questions or comments or things like that into the chat.

"Is there an assumption that RESEA and Trade being operated by the same agency, that information is communicated clearly and fully?"

So that's a fair question by Jared. I think the presumption there is simply that there's less obvious or immediate barriers. One would hope that if you're in the same agency, there's fewer barriers, although my time in ETA tells me that that's not always true. But yes. But yes, Jared. I think the assumption is that at least being in the same agency should result in fewer of those barriers that might exist between those.

All right. So please keep your questions coming into the chat. With that, I'm going to move along here and pass this over to Ellen Wright, also from our Office of Unemployment Insurance, who's going to close us out with some resources, and then we'll make sure we're answering your questions as well. Take it away, Ellen.

Ellen Wright: Thanks, Tim. This is Ellen, and I just want to reiterate that I'm very happy to be here, and thank you all for attending this webinar. If at any time my audio cuts out or you can't hear me clearly, just let me know in the chat, and I'll make adjustments. Next slide, please.

So as you can see, the CLEAR website is known as the Clearinghouse for Labor Evaluation and Research. More often than not, we just simply call it CLEAR, and it's a place where you -- we have studies that a variety of labor related topic areas.

And for the RESEA topic area, the studies focus on interventions designed to promote faster reemployment of UI claimants. And this is really throwing it back to what Larry presented about the Social Security Act Section 306(b), where we're trying to improve employment outcomes of individuals that receive unemployment compensation and to reduce average duration of receipt of such compensation through employment.

Other topic areas that are discussed at the CLEAR website are ones that include job search, which really looks at the effectiveness of job search assistance interventions that improve a participant's employment and earning outcomes. And this all goes back to the goals of what the RESEA program is about. Next slide, please.

And this is the My Reemployment Connections homepage, and there's a variety of resources that are located at the WorkforceGPS website. We work very hard to keep it current and up to date with the latest and greatest information on RESEA. But there are still some oldies on this website that are still excellent resources like the WIOA Evaluation Tool Kit. That's an extensive general guide on how to conduct workforce evaluations that can be found here, and you'll see that we've got things like re-envisioning work search, tools and technology, things done at the state and local service delivery, and then the WIOA connection. Next slide, please.

So here's a variety of resources that can be found on that My Reemployment Connection page, and the first one under the general resources is the My Reemployment Plan. And the My Reemployment Plan is a template that's generic interactive job search guide, and it serves as a type of road map that can be adapted to specific requirements in various economies of the states and of the regions.

The next one under the general re-envisioning work search, there are a few resources listed here that may be of assistance with work searches, and those do include the new approaches for supporting those mature workers.

Under the Behavioral Interventions (Reemployment), this represents the initial findings on the effects of an intervention designed to encourage UI claimants to participate in their state's REA pilot program. And if you remember, Larry, during his presentation, said that REA was the preceding program to RESEA. So it's kind of -- we're really working hard to build up our RESEA data and evidence.

And we have some new resources that are available, and one such is the RESEA customer flow scenario. And it's part of the WIOA series of what customers can expect at an AJC, and we follow the claimant miles, who we see using his My Reemployment Plan, and the career one-stop.

Another new resource that we have is the new performance reporting guide. And because RESEA reporting takes place in both UI and WIOA systems, this document gives a summary of the reports associated with RESEA. These reports are the ETA 9128, 9129, and the 9178. And their requirements, as well as the WIOA data, are collected to determine what RESEA measures are.

In addition, this document provides tips on how to accurately complete these reports because, as you've seen throughout this presentation, that information is crucial for how we adjust and adapt our programs.

We've already kind of discussed under the evaluation and research what CLEAR is about and how it really supports states and their understanding of CLEAR being used to inform RESEA program design. But I do want to highlight a few feature pages under the CLEAR, which is the plain language tool that supports states in completing and updating their evidence-based standards and the evaluation requirements of the RESEA state plan. And this is all part of the new requirements of RESEA. I believe it was number four on the new requirements slide presented under Larry's presentation.

We move down to the new report to Congress, and this report is about providing information about the promising interventions that have been identified to date. This report is required as part of Section 30206(b) of the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018, Public Law 115 and 123. And it's really about us being able to report on those promising reemployment interventions. And that falls back under to CLEAR on how states can use the information and tools there to help better inform their program design.

Again, with RESEA, we are looking at interventions that are high to moderate coggle.

And then just a small reminder about the TAA section, that the WorkforceGPS is a very diverse website that is full of all kinds of information, and that does include our cohorts over at TAA and the diverse resources available there.

Are there any questions or concerns? So with that, I'll pass it back to Tim. Thank you all.

MR. THEBERGE: Thank you, Ellen. All right. So again, any questions you have, please put them into that chat down at the bottom left.

As -- again, as a reminder and to highlight what Ellen just said, we really do look at the data. We pride ourselves on being a data-driven organization. And so, when that data comes in, we actually look at it, and this is what that data is trying to tell us, and we want to know what this means.

How can we then adapt our programs or make suggested changes or help you all better implement them based on what the data is telling us? And again, so, this is one of those fields that admittedly, until fairly recently, I don't think any of us had really looked at in depth or attempted to monitor against or validate this. But I would encourage all of you to take a look and see how your systems are in fact reporting this particular element because I think it can be telling.

And again, I would highlight the significant difference between the nation on claimant referred by RESEA at the 11 percent versus Massachusetts' rate of somewhere around 36 or 37.

So these are the contact for the presenters that we had today, along with the generic inbox for your RESEA questions all here for you to be able to answer any additional questions, comments, or concerns you might have.

If you have any questions, please enter them into the chat. Since we do have a minute, instead, I'm going to ask one for you, which is, what can ETA do to support increased coordination between TAA and RESEA in your state? Is there something we can do in addition to today's recorded webinar, which we strongly encourage you to share with your peers in your state, especially if one of those other program folks wasn't able to attend today's session, to take a look at these materials and then have some further conversations?

So with that, I'll give you a minute or two to add any remaining comments or questions you might have into the chat.

I will take this time as your moderator to thank Larry, Ellen, and Beth for presenting today. As I've stated, we always want to, whenever we can, make sure that we're offering you a true real-world example of things that we think are a good idea, especially when we see them actually working in the field. And so, again, that's why we asked Beth to be on here today and why all of our materials we really try to show you real-world examples that you can then implement yourselves.

Today's PowerPoint is available for download in the file share window.

Maria Lasanta (sp), buenas tardes. Mi amiga, it's always great to hear from my favorite island in the sun. Mi cuerpo es Americano pero mi corazon es Puerto Ricano. Si. So Maria, if you need my contact information, I will enter that into the chat, as I am always available to anyone, not just my friends in Puerto Rico.

So with that, I don't see any questions coming in. So I'm going to hand this back over to Laura, unless any of my fellow feds had anything else to add. So there we go.

LAWRENCE BURNS: Tim, this is Larry. I just wanted to jump in and mention, as you mentioned, we're kind of just digging through data now and really exploring this. But in addition to questions, if -- we saw a lot of comments in the chat about maybe some promising practices.

So if you have things that you want to share with us on the promising practice end, we'd love to hear about that too. So feel free to contact Ellen or me or use the OUI.RESEA inbox to get in touch because we're trying to get kind of a feel for what else is happening and maybe some things we could promote as a good practice. So just wanted to put a plug in for that as well. And thanks again for having us.

MR. THEBERGE: Thanks, Larry. Yeah. Look. Great to have you on. We are always interested in having our partner programs present with us. Again, we view ourselves as just one part of this broader system. And how do we really bring all of the best parts of these programs to bear -- right -- for the system, recognizing that, again, our goal is reemployment?

And yes, if you have real-world examples, regardless of what program it is, specifically if it's RESEA or Trade for today's purpose, but we are always looking for good models to share with the rest of the system. Those best practices or promising practices are what we are always seeking to highlight.

MS. CASERTANO: All right.

(END)