

ELEMENTS OF AN UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE (UI) REEMPLOYMENT SERVICES AND ELIGIBILITY ASSESSMENT (RESEA) GRANT STATE PLAN

2021

1. State Name

Texas

2. Name and Title of the State Agency Administrator

Name: **Edward Serna**

Title: **Executive Director**

Address: **101 East 15th St. Austin, TX 78778**

3. RESEA Program Lead/Contact

The Person who can answer questions about the RESEA Proposal.

Name: **Patricia Martinez**

Telephone: **512-463-2993**

Email: **patricia.martinez@twc.state.tx.us**

4. UI Program Lead/Contact

The person who can answer questions about the U/ aspects of the RESEA proposal. This person may also be the RESEA Program Lead/Contact.

Name: **Chris Oakley**

Telephone: **512-936-3226**

Email: **chris.oakley@twc.state.tx.us**

5. Total Funds From prior RESEA Grants Projected to carry over

Please include expected date for full obligation and expenditure of these remaining funds.

Obligation date-(mm/dd/yy) expected by:

01/31/21

Expenditure date-(mm/dd/yy) expected by:

12/31/21

Total funds from prior RESEA Grants projected to remain after Dec. 31, 2018:

\$2,100.000

6. Total Proposed RESEA Project Cost

The total amount of funds requested in this grant, which may be up to the limit specified in annual RESEA operating guidance:

\$11,745,300

(If needed, please use the box below to elaborate on grant funds.)

Texas recognizes the value and potential of the RESEA program. The Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) is in the early stages of exploring and implementing substantial programmatic changes in both service-delivery design and operations to expand the scope and scale of the program. Changes underway include additional staffing; additional flexibilities for the use of virtual technology, including the use of self-paced and prerecorded virtual orientations; and IT system enhancements, including additional automation to improve the feedback loop with UI staff. Texas is also refining operational guidance and training for front line staff.

The state suspended work search requirement for all UI claimants in March 2020 to provide pandemic-related relief, which temporarily suspended RESEA requirements. However, work-search requirements were fully reinstated in Nov. 2020 and Texas's RESEA program has since returned to full operation.

7. Total Service Delivery (Program) Cost

The total amount of funds requested for staff and resources necessary to conduct the RESEAs excluding administrative and evaluation costs:

\$8,708,975

(If needed, please use the box below to elaborate on program costs.)

This amount reflects the maximum award (\$11,745,300) less 10 percent for evaluation activities (\$1,174,530), 15 percent for administration costs (\$1,761,795), and the additional \$100,000 for information technology (IT) enhancements.

8. Total Administrative Costs

The total amount of funds requested for program administrative costs. Please include a breakout of these costs (Note: This entry includes IT costs).

\$1,861,795

(If needed, please use the box below to elaborate on administrative costs.)

Additional state-level program staff salary and benefits: \$339,806

Information technology system enhancements: \$100,000

State-level administration: \$1,421,989

9. Staff and Administrative Costs for a Single Completed Initial RESEA

\$163

Please include narrative describing how amounts were calculated.

Calculations are based on average staff time for required services multiplied by average staff cost, which is figured at \$40.80, including prorated indirect costs and benefits. $\$40.80 \times 4 \text{ hours} = \163.20

10. Completed Initial RESEA Staffing and Time

Complete chart below to provide additional information about how specific required initial RESEA activities are:

Activity	Staff	Individual/Group	Average Time	Staff Cost/Hour
Eligibility Review	other	individual	30 minutes	\$20.40
LMI	other	individual	30 minutes	\$20.40
Employment Plan	other	individual	60 minutes	\$40.80
Orientation	other	Both	30 minutes	\$20.40
WP enrollment	other	individual	45 minutes	\$30.60
Support for EP	other	Both	15 minutes	\$10.20
Referrals	other	individual	30 minutes	\$20.40
Totals			240 minutes	\$163.20

11. Staff and Administrative Costs for Subsequent RESEA

If subsequent RESEAs are not included in program design, please indicate "No Subsequent" in text box below:

\$82

(If needed, please use the box below to elaborate on Staff and Administrative costs for subsequent RESEAs.)

Subsequent RESEAs will only be conducted on a randomly selected control group as part of Texas' required evaluation activities. Calculations are based on average staff time for required services multiplied by average staff cost, which is figured at \$40.80, including prorated indirect costs and benefits. $\$40.80 \times 2 \text{ hours} = \81.60

12. Completed Subsequent RESEA Staffing and Time

Complete the chart below to provide additional information about how specific subsequent RESEA activities are:

Activity	Staff	Individual/Group	Average Time	Staff Cost/Hour
Eligibility Review	other	individual	15 minutes	\$10.20
LMI	other	individual	15 minutes	\$10.20
Update Employment Plan/Coenrollment	other	individual	30 minutes	\$20.40
Resume Dev.	other	Individual	60 minutes	\$40.80
Totals			120 minutes	\$81.60

13. Projected Time for a Single Initial RESEA, Including Paperwork

In addition to information provided in 12, this entry should represent total time spent preparing for and conducting a single initial RESEA, including preparation, documentation and other related activities:

5 hours

14. Projected Time for the Subsequent RESEA, Including Paperwork

In addition to information provided in 15, this entry should represent total time spent preparing for and conducting a single subsequent RESEA, including preparation, documentation and other related activities. (projected time for a subsequent RESEA and paperwork):

3 hours

15. Projected Costs for a Single RESEA for which the Claimant Fails to Report

The total costs spent scheduling a single RESEA for which the claimant subsequently fails to report and referring the claimant to adjudication for failure to report. This estimate should not include the costs of adjudication, which are separately funded:

\$18

16. Total Number of Initial RESEAs to be Scheduled

The total number of initial RESEAs that will be scheduled including both the RESEAs for which claimants are projected to report and the RESEAs for which claimants are projected to fail to report. (Number of initial RESEAs to be scheduled):

50,741

17. Total Number of Subsequent RESEAs to be Scheduled

The total number of subsequent RESEAs that will be scheduled including both the RESEAs for which claimants are projected to report and the RESEAs for which claimants are projected to fail to report. (If the state does not conduct subsequent RESEAs this number will be zero.) (Number of subsequent RESEAs to be scheduled):

5,343

18. Total Number of RESEAs Projected to be Completed

The total number of RESEAs the state will schedule during the grant period for which the claimant will report and participate in an RESEA. Please include breakout of initial and subsequent, if applicable. (Number of RESEAs projected to be completed)

43,184 = 39,071 initial + 4113 subsequent

19. Total Number of RESEAs Projected for which the Claimant Will Fail to Report

The total number of RESEAs the state will schedule during the grant period for which the claimant will fail to report and will not participate in an RESEA. (Number of RESEAs projected to be unreported):

12,899

20. Actions Taken to Reduce Number of Claimants Failing to Report.

If the state has taken any actions in the past year and/or plans to carry out any activities under the proposed RESEA program to reduce the number of claimants failing to report, please identify and provide a brief description.

Please select all that apply:

Self-scheduling of appointments

Automated reminders

Restructuring of notifications and other communications (behavioral insights, plain-language, etc.)

Other

Insert brief narrative of actions taken or planned:

Texas recently began allowing the use of self-paced and virtual orientations and updated the notification letter sent to mandatory participants. Texas also has continued the efforts to expand capacity by increasing local staff and emphasizing the use of virtual technology to serve RESEA claimants. Texas is also working to implement additional system automation to help strengthen the feedback loop with UI and improve program operation.

21. Total number of RESEA Sites

The total number of sites where RESEAs will be conducted. If RESEAs are conducted statewide (at least one location in each Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act [WIDA] workforce development area), please indicate "statewide." If RESEAs are provided at limited sites, list the towns/cities or local workforce development areas where RESEA activities will be conducted. If RESEA is not available statewide, Worker Profiling and Reemployment Services (WPRS) must be provided in areas where RESEA is not available.

Number of sites providing RESEAs:

Statewide

22. Role of UI Staff

Briefly describe the role played by UI staff in program management. Please note that all eligibility determinations and redeterminations are funded through the regular UI funding for non-monetary determinations and not through the RESEA grant.

Insert description of UI staff roles:

If a claimant fails to report for or complete RESEA services, notification is sent to UI staff, which then contacts the claimant to determine the reason for noncompliance. If the claimant is not able to establish good cause as determined by TWC, UI staff issues a determination holding the claimant ineligible to receive benefits for the week. If the claimant does not respond to the UI staff contact request or complete all RESEA services, future payments are suspended until the claimant resolves the issue. UI staff is also notified about eligibility issues discovered through the RESEA eligibility review process using the WF-42 notification form. Staff investigates and adjudicates issues in accordance with state law.

23. Selection of RESEA Participants:

Please describe the state's methodology for selecting claimants to participate in the RESEA program and at what point in the claim series selections are made. If a profiling or statistical model is used please describe the model including factors used and when the model was last updated. UI claimants who have a definite return-to-work date; claimants who secure work only through a union hiring hall; and claimants who are in approved training should be excluded from the RESEA program.

Insert description of how claimants are selected:

Each week, claimants who received their first unemployment benefits payment are profiled and assigned a score using the RESEA statistical model to indicate each claimant's likelihood of exhausting his or her unemployment benefits. The statistical model determines which claimants are most likely to exhaust benefits and assigns a score between 0.00 and 1.00, based on individual factors, such as work history, unemployment claim history, and wage earnings. A higher score indicates a greater risk of exhausting unemployment benefits before returning to work. TWC's Division of Operational Insight determines cutoff scores for each Local Workforce Development Board (Board) based on local exhaustion rates and economic conditions. Each Board's cutoff scores are reviewed quarterly and

revised as necessary. Claimants who are assigned an RESEA score that is at or above the Board's cutoff score must participate in and complete all required RESEA services. Claimants who are exempt from the work-search requirement for reasons allowed under the law are not included in the profiling process.

24. Proper Notification

All states participating in the RESEA program must provide both an assurance that, and description of how, individuals selected to participate in RESEA will receive proper notifications regarding the program's eligibility conditions, requirements, and benefits. Proper notifications must be in clear and simple language and include warnings to ensure selected individuals are fully aware of the consequences of noncompliance with the state's policies related to nonattendance and/or nonfulfillment of UI work search requirements. (Section 306(e)(1)(A)(i), Social Security Act (SSA)).

Do you assure that proper notification as described in Element (28) will be provided?

Yes

Insert description of notification process and attach template used for notifications:

Mandatory participants identified through the profiling process are included in the outreach pool in Texas' automated system. The participant's information is automatically populated into a notification letter that is sent to the participant providing the required information. TWC UI policy staff assisted in the drafting of the language to ensure the proper notifications are included. The letter informs the claimant of the required services, appointment location and date/time, the consequences of noncompliance, and instructions for how to comply. The notification must be sent to the claimant at least 6 days prior to the date of the appointment.

25. Reasonable Scheduling Accommodations

To maximize participation in the RESEA program, the state must provide assurance that, and a description of how reasonable scheduling accommodations are made available to individuals selected for RESEA (Section 306(e)(1)(A)(ii), SSA).

Do you assure that reasonable scheduling accommodations are available to RESEA participants?

Yes

Insert a description of the reasonable scheduling accommodations provided:

If a claimant contacts Workforce Solutions Office staff to request that the RESEA orientation be rescheduled due to a conflict or issue, staff may reschedule the appointment. Texas has also recently expanded the use of virtual orientations and self-paced webinars that claimants can complete at their convenience. Front line staff are instructed to never deny services to claimants who are willing to participate.

26. UI Feedback Loop and Adjudication.

Once selected for an initial or subsequent RESEA, claimants are required to participate in all components of the RESEA. Failure to report or participate in any aspect of the RESEA must result in referral to the UI agency for adjudication under the applicable state law. States must include a description of the UI feedback loop and adjudication process.

Insert a brief description regarding the feedback loop from the RESEA provider to the UI system on whether the claimants reported and participated in required activities as directed:

If a claimant fails to report for or complete RESEA services, notification is sent to UI staff, which contacts the claimant to determine the reason for noncompliance. If the claimant is not able to establish good cause as determined by TWC, UI staff issues a determination holding the claimant ineligible to receive benefits. If the claimant does not respond to the UI staff contact request or complete all required services, future payments are suspended until the claimant resolves the issue. UI staff is also notified about eligibility issues discovered through the RESEA process. Staff investigates and adjudicates issues in accordance with state law.

Insert a brief description of the feedback loop established to refer any UI eligibility issues identified during the RESEA for adjudication:

Potential unemployment benefits eligibility issues that are discovered during the provision of RESEA services must be reported to the local Workforce Unemployment Insurance (WFUI) coordinator for investigation using the WF-42 form. To report a potential unemployment benefits eligibility issue, Workforce Solutions Office staff password-protects the form and submits the completed form via email to the local WFUI coordinator. UI staff investigates and issues a determination in accordance with state law. Potential issues are documented and tracked in a database to ensure compliance.

27. Activities Supporting RESEA's Statutory Purposes

Each state must provide assurance that, and description of how, the planned RESEA program will conform to the four statutory purposes identified below (Section 306(e){I}{B}, SSA).

27(a) Purpose 1: To improve employment outcomes of individuals that receive unemployment compensation and to reduce the average duration of receipt of such compensation through unemployment.

Do you assure that the proposed RESEA program design and planned activities conform to purpose 1 as described in Element 27(a)?

Yes

Insert brief description of specific RESEA program elements and/or activities that support this purpose.

RESEA provides a process for offering hands-on reemployment services to UI claimants who are determined likely to exhaust benefits before finding suitable employment. Allowable reemployment services are designed to improve participants' job-seeking skills and marketability and foster a speedy reconnection to the workforce so that claimants can earn a living wage, which in turn reduces the duration of UI claims.

27(b) Purpose 2: To strengthen program integrity and reduced improper payments of unemployment compensation by states through the detection and prevention of such payments to individuals who are not eligible for such compensation.

Do you assure that the proposed RESEA program design and planned activities are conform to purpose 2 as described in Element 27(b)?

Yes

Insert brief description of specific RESEA program elements and/or activities that support this purpose.

The unemployment benefits eligibility assessment service requires Workforce Solutions Office staff members to meet one-on-one with the claimant to determine whether the claimant is complying with all unemployment benefits eligibility requirements; this meeting must include a review of the claimant's work-search activities. The assessment also must include a referral to UI for adjudication if an issue or potential issue is identified. Issues are investigated and adjudicated by UI staff in accordance with state law.

27(c) Purpose 3: To promote alignment with the broader vision of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) (29 U.S.C. 3101 et seq.) of increased program integration and service delivery for job seekers, including claimants for unemployment compensation. (Note: Additional information about the vision of WIOA is provided in Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 19-14, Vision for the Workforce System and Initial Implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and additional information specific State UI programs is provided in Unemployment Insurance Program Letter 14-18).

Do you assure that the proposed RESEA program design and planned activities conform to purpose 3 as described in Element 27(c)?

Yes

Insert a brief description of the specific RESEA program elements and/or activities that support this purpose including information about how RESEA has been integrated into the State's workforce system and network of AJCs.

In Texas, RESEA is operated as a workforce program. One of Texas' primary goals for RESEA is to connect UI claimants to reemployment services, including coenrollment in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) dislocated worker program or other program services, as appropriate. Required services include information about and referrals to other services available through Texas' Workforce Solutions Offices, and in most cases, participants are required to report to a Workforce Solutions Office for services, which furthers the goal of one-stop service centers and exposes claimants to information on all workforce services.

27(d) Purpose 4: Establish reemployment service and eligibility assessment as an entry point for individuals receiving unemployment compensation into other workforce system partner programs.

Do you assure that the proposed RESEA program design and planned activities conform to purpose 4 as described?

Yes

Insert brief description of specific RESEA program elements and/or activities that support this goal.

Required RESEA services in Texas include an orientation and access to services available through Texas' Workforce Solutions Offices. These are services of which claimants may otherwise not be aware. Claimants in most cases are also required to report to a Workforce Solutions Office for services, which also facilitates access and entry to other partner programs.

28. Evidence-based Standards and Evaluation Requirements

Each state must provide assurances and a description of how the state's RESEA program will satisfy the requirement to use grant funds only for interventions and service delivery strategies designed to reduce the number of weeks for which program participants receive unemployment compensation by improving employment outcomes for participants, including employment and earnings. States implementing RESEA interventions or service delivery strategies without a high or moderate causal rating must be under evaluation at the time of use. (Section 306(e)(1)(B), SSA).

28(a): Do you assure that the state's RESEA program will satisfy the requirement to use grant funds only for interventions and service delivery strategies designed to reduce the number of weeks for which program participants receive unemployment compensation by improving employment outcomes for participants, including employment and earnings?

Yes.

Insert description of the evidence-based interventions and service delivery strategies the State plans to use to speed reemployment, including specific references to the evidence relied upon:

Texas' current service-delivery strategy is closely related to the Reemployment and Eligibility Assessment (REA) initiative in Nevada, which included an orientation to Workforce Solutions Offices, an eligibility assessment, the development of an individual employment plan, customized labor market information, and registration in the state's job matching system. The Nevada program was the focus of the 2012 study "Impact of the Reemployment and Eligibility Assessment (REA) Initiative in Nevada," which is featured on the US Department of Labor's CLEAR site and has a high causal evidence rating.

Insert an explanation of how such interventions and service delivery strategies are appropriate to the population served.

The interventions and service-delivery strategy of the Texas RESEA program are designed to improve participants' job-seeking skills and marketability and to help claimants find suitable employment as quickly as possible. The Texas RESEA program currently focuses on claimants most likely to exhaust benefits before finding suitable employment. Therefore, the service-delivery strategy directly addresses the needs of the population served.

28(b): Do you assure that the RESEA interventions or service delivery strategies used to implement the program without a high or moderate causal rating are under evaluation at the time of use?

Yes.

Insert, if applicable, a description of the evaluation structure the State plans to use for interventions and service delivery strategies without at least a moderate or high causal evidence rating, which may include national evaluations conducted by the U.S. Department of Labor or by other entities.

Texas' evaluation plans use a graduated framework to logically progress to the ultimate goal of establishing high or moderate causal evidence ratings for all interventions and the service-delivery strategy for the state's RESEA program. Phase one, initiated during Program Year 2020, included planning of a statewide implementation study to fully understand how the program is being operated across Texas' 28 local workforce development boards. This will allow for the development of best practices and standardized operations across the state. Phase one also included the development of an impact study on providing a subsequent RESEA appointment. Some RESEA claimants will be randomly selected to receive a subsequent RESEA session, and the outcomes of both groups will be used to determine the impact of the second session and the interventions and services provided. TWC is also using previous data collected through the program to develop a quasi-experimental study on program outcomes. The results of these evaluation activities will be used to inform the next logical steps in evaluating the remaining program elements until all interventions used or developed in the Texas RESEA program have the required causal evidence rating.

Although the response to the Covid-19 pandemic has presented some challenges, progress continues to be made. Plans for 2021 include procurement of a third-party vendor to help design and administer the statewide implementation study and further development of the random control trial portion of the impact study. Texas is also continuing to develop a quasi-experimental design statistical study using data collected from previous RESEA participants, to look at the impact of RESEA services on individual outcomes.

28(c): Total funds that will be set-aside to conduct or cause to be conducted evaluations of interventions used in carrying out the RESEA Program. This amount is limited to 10 percent of grant award (Section 306(d)(2), SSA).

\$1,174,530

28(d): Insert a description of any reemployment activities and evaluations of reemployment interventions and service delivery strategies conducted in the prior fiscal year and any data collected on:

1. Characteristics of program participants;
2. Number of weeks for which program participants receive unemployment compensation; and
3. Employment and other outcomes for program participants consistent with State performance accountability measures provided by the State unemployment compensation program and performance outcome measures as defined in section 116(b) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3141(b))

Texas' evaluation plans use a graduated framework to logically progress to the ultimate goal of establishing high or moderate causal evidence ratings for all interventions and the service-delivery strategy for the state's RESEA program. Phase one, initiated during Program Year 2020, included planning of a statewide implementation study to fully understand how the program is being operated across Texas' 28 local workforce development boards. This will allow for the development of best

practices and standardized operations across the state. Phase one also included the development of an impact study on providing a subsequent RESEA appointment. Some RESEA claimants will be randomly selected to receive a subsequent RESEA session, and the outcomes of both groups will be used to determine the impact of the second session and the interventions and services provided.

29. Planned Supplemental Activities if Additional Funding is Available- Participants Served

NA

30. Planned Supplemental Activities if Additional Funding is Available- Innovation

NA