



Agency Priority Goal | Action Plan | FY 2022 – Q4

# Strengthening America's Safety Net for Workers

Goal Leaders:

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# Goal Team

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## Contents

Goal Team .....	2
Goal Overview .....	4
Goal Strategies to Achieve Success.....	6
Goal Targets/Key Indicators.....	8
Key Milestones.....	9
Narrative – Fiscal Year 2022, Q1 .....	13
Data Accuracy and Reliability.....	18
Contributing Programs.....	20
Overall Goal Status.....	22

# Goal Overview

## Goal Statement

By September 30, 2023, the Department will 1) increase intrastate first payments of unemployment benefits made within 21 days by at least 10 percent towards the regulatory target of 87 percent and 2) reduce the estimated improper payment rate of unemployment benefits. The Department will also plan and offer new, innovative technical assistance and grants to strengthen Unemployment Insurance (UI) service delivery, fraud prevention, and equitable access.

## Problem to Be Solved

Since the pandemic began in the U.S. in early 2020, Unemployment Insurance (UI) claims rose exponentially totaling 89.4 million initial claims from mid-March 2020 through the end of September 2021. The increase and magnitude of initial claims over this period were the highest since the Department began tracking UI data in 1967. Over the course of the pandemic since March 1, 2020, the UI system paid UI benefits to nearly 55 million workers, adding over \$850 billion into states' economies.

While states mobilized quickly to implement new temporary pandemic-related UI programs, because of years of low administrative funding, reductions in staff, outdated technology and a lack of resources, states were poorly positioned to provide quality services to the extraordinary numbers of claimants filing for unemployment compensation. States abruptly and unexpectedly faced a significant increase in claims, going from historic lows in weekly claims volume to dealing with unprecedented and unforeseen levels of claims -- processing about 200,000 initial claims for the week ending March 7, 2020 to processing over 6.1 million initial claims for the week ending April 4, 2020. The pandemic exposed longstanding operational and technological weaknesses in state UI systems, which have resulted in delays and obstacles that disproportionately affect workers of color and created potential racial and ethnic disparities in the percentages of unemployment applicants who received benefits during the pandemic.

The following major challenges have been identified in the UI system due to COVID-19:

1. **Decline in State UI Program Performance:** The economic impacts of the pandemic resulted in an unprecedented increase in UI claims. States experienced significant backlogs in adjudications and appeals, reductions in core program performance (timeliness of payments, adjudications, and appeals) and reduced quality of determinations, which resulted in a decline in the states' acceptable levels of program performance.
2. **Increase in Fraud:** The UI program has been especially vulnerable to increasing criminal fraud attacks and states had limited staffing resources and limited experience dealing with sophisticated identity fraud operations.
3. **Impact on Service Delivery to UI Claimants:** States struggled to provide timely and quality services due to the extraordinary numbers of claimants filing for unemployment compensation and the resulting backlogs, which impacted the quality of service delivery to UI claimants.
4. **Contributing Factors (not a comprehensive list):**
  - a. Years of low administrative funding and reductions in staff prior to the pandemic;
  - b. Unprecedented increase in claims volume during the pandemic;
  - c. Implementing and operating a variety of new temporary UI programs in the midst of the pandemic;

- d. States' antiquated and inflexible information technology systems were a major contributing factor in the states' inability to provide quality services and benefits. States struggled to program their UI systems and implement the new temporary pandemic-related UI programs;
- e. States found it necessary to quickly onboard new, inexperienced staff to respond to crushing workload demands;
- f. States also faced turnover in senior leadership;
- g. States had to adjust rapidly to remote work environments for all UI program functions; and
- h. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the UI system was a major target for sophisticated and organized criminal fraud

### **What Success Looks Like**

ETA has identified and highlighted in this APG the key strategies and milestones that support states' ability to:

1. Improve State UI Program Performance, including enhancing reemployment connections (Performance Improvement and Reemployment Connections);
2. Strengthen Program Integrity by Preventing and Detecting Fraud, Reducing Improper Payments, and Facilitating Recovery of Overpaid Benefits (Program Integrity); and
3. Improve Quality of Services Provided to UI Claimants (Quality Service)

# Goal Strategies to Achieve Success

## **Performance Improvement and Reemployment Connections:**

ETA will assist and support states to return to acceptable levels of program performance as quickly as possible by:

1. Developing standardized backlog tracking and reporting
2. Supporting States with targeted technical assistance (TA), in partnership with the Office of UI Modernization (OUIIM)

ETA will also enhance reemployment connections by:

1. Revising the Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) State Plan Template and provide TA
2. Integrating RESEA Monitoring and Other Reemployment Programs
3. Continuing to Implement RESEA Performance Measures and Performance-Based Outcome Payments
4. Publishing Worker Profiling and Reemployment Services (WPRS) / RESEA participant selection Guidance, and provide TA

## **Program Integrity:**

OUI continues to actively and aggressively address integrity and fraud in the UI program by:

1. Investing in Technology and Tools (notably, identity verification solutions) working in partnership with OUIIM, the UI Integrity Center, the Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO), and the US Digital Service
2. Providing Grants to States – fraud prevention grants offered to states
3. Providing Targeted TA
4. Coordinating with Banks, Financial Institutions, and Law Enforcement
5. Requiring State Integrity Action Plans
6. Collaborating with UI Integrity Center
7. Partnering with OIG and Law Enforcement

## **Quality Service:**

1. Tiger Team Initiative / Strategy: ETA will work in partnership with OUIIM to improve the quality of service provided to claimants by funding multi-disciplinary teams to work in collaboration with the states to conduct an intensive discovery process to quickly pinpoint challenges and identify recommended solutions for states to implement
2. Grants to States: ETA will provide funding opportunities to states participating in the Tiger Team strategy to fund identified recommendations negotiated with ETA

## **Structural Barriers and Challenges**

A number of statutory requirements impose challenges to reducing UI improper payments:

1. Federal-State Partnership: Each state administers the UI program according to its own laws and policies, which must conform to broad federal requirements. Improper payment rates often reflect differences in state laws. Additionally, states have bottom-line authority to set operational priorities. DOL has limited authority to ensure states use their administrative funding to pursue improper payment rate reduction activities.
2. Statutory requirements to pay “when due” and to provide due process prior to stopping benefit payments: Federal UI law includes structural, but essential, program features that substantially contribute to the UI improper payment rate. Section 303(a)(1) of the Social Security Act requires UI benefit payments to be made “when due” and prohibits

states from suspending payments until an official determination has been made that payments are no longer due. This statutory structural feature legally requires states to make payments based upon available evidence that may be later detected as improper as a result of obtaining new information. When a claimant has been initially determined eligible and is in continued claims status, there is a presumption of continued eligibility until a claimant is provided due process, which requires notice and the opportunity to be heard prior to stopping payment of benefits.

## Goal Targets/Key Indicators

By Sept. 30, 2023, we will...	Name of Indicator	FY 2023 Target	FY 2022 YTD <sup>1</sup> Target	FY 2022 YTD Result <sup>2</sup>	Update Cycle
Increase the percent of all intrastate first payments of unemployment benefits made within 21 days	First Payment Timeliness	66.4%	63.2%	57.8%	Quarterly
Reduce the estimated improper payment rate of unemployment benefits <sup>3</sup>	Improper Payment Rate	17.50%	14.00%	21.52%	Quarterly

<sup>1</sup> Year-to-Date

<sup>2</sup> Results for these measures lag by one quarter. Q3 results are provided with this Q4 update.

<sup>3</sup> Targets and results for this measure are for the 12-month periods ending June 30. For example, the 2022 result is for June 30, 2022

# Key Milestones

## Performance Improvement and Reemployment Connections

Owner	Key Milestone	Milestone Due Date	Milestone Status	Comments
ETA	Leverage current workstreams (Tiger Teams, Equity Grants, Technical Assistance) to establish appropriate baseline state-level demographic data metrics, collections, and reports to identify equity-based metrics and to develop future targets.	09/30/2023	On Schedule	ETA-OUI-24
ETA	Develop and submit for public comment an ICR concerning equity performance data for the UI program.	9/30/2023	On Schedule	ETA-OUI-25
ETA	Submit notice to Federal Register seeking comments on revisions to existing Information Collection Request to collect enhanced/expanded demographic data elements.	12/31/2022	Behind Schedule (Revised due date 03/31/2023)	ETA-OUI-26
ETA	Identify 18 states to receive services of Unemployment Insurance (UI) Response/Tiger Teams to help address backlogs and recommend actions to improve the timeliness of UI benefit payments.	12/31/2021	Completed	ETA-OUI-02
ETA	ETA will develop and issue new reports that state UI agencies will be required to submit to ETA on the backlogs of claims adjudications and appeals	06/30/2022	Behind Schedule (Revised due date 12/31/2023)	ETA-OUI-03

Owner	Key Milestone	Milestone Due Date	Milestone Status	Comments
ETA	Identify and share with states, throughout the UI Community of Practice and Webinars or Webcasts, best practices for reducing backlogs or for improving timeliness of UI benefit payments	09/30/2022	Behind Schedule (Revised due date 12/31/2022)	ETA-OUI-05
ETA	Publish Worker Profiling and Reemployment Services (WPRS) guidance and conduct related webinar for state agencies.	03/31/2022	Behind Schedule (Revised due date 3/31/2023)	ETA-OUI-20
ETA	Publish a revised Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) state plan template.	12/31/2022	On Schedule	ETA-OUI-21
ETA	Complete implementation of new RESEA monitoring requirements.	06/30/2022	Behind Schedule (Revised due date 03/31/2023)	ETA-OUI-22
ETA	Revise National RESEA performance plan and develop timeline for full implementation	09/30/2022	Behind Schedule (Revised due date 12/31/2022)	ETA-OUI-23

## Program Integrity

Owner	Key Milestone	Milestone Due Date	Milestone Status	Comments
ETA	Research and compile list of state fraud prevention and detection laws and tools, including ID verification services, and identify opportunities to provide enhanced technical assistance aimed at strengthening UI program integrity and fraud management operations.	06/30/2022	Completed	ETA-OUI-27
ETA	Develop and issue updated identity (ID) verification guidance setting baseline expectations for State Workforce Agencies (SWAs) regarding ID proofing/verification requirements	09/30/2022	Behind Schedule (Revised due date 03/31/2023)	ETA-OUI-28
ETA	Increase the number of SWAs using National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) – compliant digital authentication technology to strengthen SWAs' UI systems with the goal of 30 SWAs using such technology	09/30/2023	On Schedule	ETA-OUI-06
ETA	Complete implementation with a minimum of 30 states to use the Bank Account Verification (BAV) services deployed through the UI Integrity Center's integrity Data Hub (IDH), and onboarding additional states	06/30/2022	Completed	ETA-OUI-07
ETA	Increase the number of SWAs using an incarceration cross-match by continuing to encourage connection to the incarceration data exchanges, including the in the Interstate Connection Network (ICON) that uses SSA's Prisoner Update Processing System (PUP), and other incarceration datasets available for prisoner cross-matching, with the goal of 30 SWAs cross-matching UI data with incarceration data	03/31/2023	On Schedule	ETA-OUI-08
ETA	Provide assistance and monitor states' progress and use of Fraud Prevention grants	09/30/2022	Completed	ETA-OUI-14

## Quality Service

Owner	Key Milestone	Milestone Due Date	Milestone Status	Comments
ETA	Educate and provide technical assistance to policy makers concerning the need for enhancements to state administrative funding as set in President's FY 2023 budget	12/30/2022	On Schedule	ETA-OUI-12
ETA	Provide assistance and monitor states' progress and use of Equity Innovation grants	09/30/2022	Behind Schedule (Revised due date 12/31/2022)	ETA-OUI-13
ETA	On a rolling basis, cohort by cohort, Unemployment Insurance (UI) Response / Tiger Teams will provide recommendations to 18 states on improving customer experience / service	09/30/2022	Completed	ETA-OUI-15
ETA	On a rolling basis, after states have completed the Tiger Team assessment process and have submitted applications for funds, issue grants to states to support implementation of recommendations	09/30/2022	Behind Schedule (Revised due date 03/31/2023)	ETA-OUI-16
ETA	Develop a plan for future customer service metric(s) or checklist for state UI programs	12/31/2022	Behind Schedule (Revised due date 03/31/2023)	ETA-OUI-29

# Narrative – Fiscal Year 2022, Q4

## PART I - A Look Back at FY2022

### “What Success Looks Like”

ETA has identified and highlighted in this APG the key strategies and milestones that support states’ ability to:

1. Improve State UI Program Performance, including enhancing reemployment connections (Performance Improvement and Reemployment Connections);
2. Strengthen Program Integrity by Preventing and Detecting Fraud, Reducing Improper Payments, and Facilitating Recovery of Overpaid Benefits (Program Integrity); and
3. Improve Quality of Services Provided to UI Claimants (Quality Service).

### **Overall Progress**

ETA continues making progress awarding Equity grants to states. As of September 22, 2022, ETA has awarded Equity grants to 29 states, announcing \$150,561,874 in grant funding to those states. On Friday, June 10, ETA announced the award of \$18 million in UI Navigator Grants to seven states (Maine, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Washington, and Wisconsin). These grants will support states partnering with community-based organizations to raise awareness of the UI program and to help individuals in underserved communities access UI benefits to which they may be entitled. ETA continues to work with the remaining states that applied for the Equity grant to get those grants processed and approved.

In FY 2022, ETA successfully engaged 24 states, exceeding the target of 18 states for participation in the Tiger Team initiative. As a result, ETA issued over 200 recommendations to 18 of these states covering the areas of fraud prevention, equitable access, and timely delivery of benefits regarding the UI program. ETA published a compilation of the trends reflected in these recommendations, which may be found at [https://oui.doleta.gov/unemploy/pdf/TigerTeamCohortTrendsJune\\_2022.pdf](https://oui.doleta.gov/unemploy/pdf/TigerTeamCohortTrendsJune_2022.pdf). So far, ETA has funded 22 projects identified by the Tiger Teams in 8 states totaling \$11,240,674 million. ETA has provided recommendations to 18 states on improving customer experience and service. Also, ETA, working through the UI Integrity Center’s Data Hub (IDH), onboarded 30 states to use the Bank Account Verification services.

ETA provided additional funding to the states under Unemployment Insurance Program Letter (UIPL) No 28-20, Change 4, to assist with administrative costs related to reporting and overpayment detection and recovery activities. As of September 30, 2022, 45 states have been awarded \$151,542,736 to help detect overpayments and assist with recovery activities.

## Measures Below Target

### First Payment Timeliness:

States continue to struggle to meet the acceptable level of performance for first payment timeliness. They continue to address the backlog of adjudications and appeals resulting from the temporary pandemic-related UI programs and the significant increase in claims in all UI programs that were processed during the pandemic. State Administrative funding has declined from \$3,297,068,793 in FY 2021 to \$2,584,471,031 in FY 2022, which is a rather abrupt 21.6% drop in funding. Many states are also seeing reductions in staffing as reported claims volume declined and, as a result, state administrative funding declined. Based on funding appropriated by Congress in FY 2022, DOL is not able to provide full funding for earned above-base workloads reported by states. ETA is currently providing states about 55 cents on each dollar earned for above-base funding.

ETA engaged multidisciplinary Tiger Teams with 24 states (so far) to identify and support states implementing recommendations to address fraud prevention, equity, and improving processes and addressing backlogs in the UI program. The Tiger Teams recommendations include process improvements, use of technology, and use of behavioral insights and plain language to help improve state UI operations.

### Improper Payment Rate:

State UI agencies entered the COVID-19 pandemic after experiencing the lowest claims workload, and thus lowest administrative funding, in 50 years, which significantly impacted resources and staffing levels. As the pandemic shutdowns started impacting the nation's labor market, states had to ramp up staffing quickly and add new staff with minimal time for proper training to respond to the unprecedented increase in claims volume. Also, during this time, states had to quickly transition to all-remote operations to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. Moreover, states had to simultaneously implement complicated new temporary UI programs, some of which authorized UI benefits to individuals not typically eligible for UI benefits, such as self-employed and certain gig economy workers. Many states were further challenged by antiquated UI IT systems and/or were in the process of modernizing their IT system, while also implementing and administering the new temporary UI programs.

In FY 2022, state UI workloads (notably adjudication and appeals backlogs) remained elevated due to the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Benefit Year Earnings (BYE) and Separation Issue improper payments remain elevated which is likely attributable to states diverting staff to focus on backlogs in adjudications and appeals. States have also anecdotally shared that many employers ceased responding to requests for information on why claimants separated from employment because states were not charging employers' accounts under the temporary easing of eligibility requirements set forth by Congress and some employers simply going out of business.

Work Search errors are also increasing as states started reinstating work search requirements as the economy rebounded. These requirements had been suspended during the peak of the pandemic when isolation was being pursued to prevent the spread of COVID-19

ETA continues to prioritize UI program integrity as a top agency priority. ETA has actively and aggressively continued to address fraud and improper payments in the UC programs by providing support to states through guidance, technical assistance, and additional funding opportunities, including providing \$134 million in fraud prevention grants to 50 states. ETA is focused on investing in innovative tools and services; developing and evolving UI integrity strategies to address emerging issues and new fraud trends; and providing states with best practices, resources, and solutions.

### **Milestones Behind Schedule**

The following milestones were behind schedule:

- **ETA-OUI-03:** ETA's work on this milestone has been interrupted with the departure of a staff member who had been leading the workgroup dealing with this task. In addition, the Office of Unemployment Insurance has been without a Reports Team Lead to oversee this work. ETA anticipates filling this position soon. While other staff have knowledge and experience to take up this milestone, they have been dedicated on other high priority projects, such as addressing Department financial audit findings and identifying additional equity elements that could be added to improve UI reports. The milestone due date has been revised accordingly. In the most recent completed quarter, the workgroup has been reconvened and work has begun to complete this milestone.
- **ETA-OUI-05:** The deadline for this milestone has changed to December 31, 2022. Initial content development has been established and internal dialogue regarding placement within the Community of Practice is underway. Internal review and decisions will be completed by the end of calendar year (CY) 2022.
- **ETA-OUI-13:** ETA continues making progress awarding UI Equity grants to states. As of September 22, 2022, ETA has awarded UI Equity grants to 29 states, announcing \$150,561,874 in grant funding to those states. ETA is working with the remaining states that applied for the UI Equity grant funding to ensure the submitted grant request meet the requirement outlined in UIPL No. 23-21.
- **ETA-OUI-16:** Eight states have submitted applications for grant funds. This goal corresponds to ETA-OUI-04. Some states need additional time and technical assistance in getting grant applications prepared. This assistance is part of the

quarterly check-ins. The target date for completion of this milestone for the original 18 states has been changed to March 31, 2023. ETA is working closely with OUIIM to develop and execute a plan to accelerate states' implementation of funded Tiger Team recommendations.

- ETA-OUI-20: ETA recently added two new staff members to assist with its reemployment activities. ETA plans to resume WPRS work as soon as the FY 2023 RESEA operating and funding guidance is published.
- ETA-OUI-22: Per directions from Office of Grants Management leadership, the RESEA monitoring tools have been integrated into the Grant Core Monitoring Guide project. The Core Monitoring Guide is currently under final review and testing by Federal Project Officers. Anticipated adoption of new guide is projected for early 2023, and thus, the due date for this milestone has been revised to March 31, 2023, for the completion of this milestone.
- ETA-OUI-23: This milestone will be completed by the end of CY 2022. Documents implementing the revised timeline are currently in development and will be published by the end of CY 2022.
- ETA-OUI-26: ETA's Office of Unemployment Insurance has developed proposals on enhancing and expanding the demographic elements collected in existing required UI reports. ETA and Department leadership have been provided briefings on these proposals and have recently approved moving forward with these proposals. ETA is now working to prepare the appropriate documents to present to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for review as part of the Paperwork Reduction Act clearance and plans to submit these to OMB for review by March 31, 2023.
- ETA-OUI-28: ETA continues to work on guidance establishing baseline digital authentication/identity verification requirements. ETA determined it was best to break the guidance into two separate guidance documents: 1) digital authentication and 2) ID verification. The digital authentication guidance is in agency review, but it is not yet finalized. ETA anticipates issuing digital authentication guidance by March 23, 2023.

ETA will also work with the Office of Chief Information Officer (OCIO) to ensure the guidance includes recommendations for states to ensure states are implementing digital authentication and ID proofing in accordance with industry best practices.

- ETA-OUI-29: ETA will need additional time to complete this milestone. The current priority is to complete and publish the UI equity guidance (UIPL) and addressing White House identity verification concerns and the same resources that support this milestone are needed on these other high priority projects. Also, the additional time will allow ETA to apply lessons learned from the ARPA-funded UI Modernization projects (notably the plain language and the UI IT modernization vision and standards work) in developing the checklist envisioned in this milestone.

# Data Accuracy and Reliability

## First Payment Timeliness

1. **Means used to verify and validate measured values:** Data is validated by USDOL by utilizing an established data validation program
2. **Sources for the data:** First payment timeliness measures are based on data reported by the states monthly
3. **Level of accuracy required for the intended use of the data:** These data are generally highly accurate and valid data
4. **Limitations to the data at the required level of accuracy: These data do not have significant limitations,** though we note that states may have reporting challenges on occasion
5. **How the agency has compensated for such limitations, if needed, to reach the required level of accuracy:** The Office of Unemployment Insurance works with states on a case-by-case basis to address any reporting challenges

## Improper Payment Rate

1. **Means used to verify and validate measured values:** State Benefit Accuracy Measurement (BAM) staff investigate the accuracy of each paid week sampled to determine if all eligibility requirements are met and the claim is properly paid. These investigation outcomes are further validated by state BAM supervisors. Additionally, ETA UI staff (Regional and National) conduct state peer reviews of state audits to ensure the accuracy of the state BAM audit results.
2. **Sources for the data:** The BAM statistical survey is used to estimate the improper payment rate at the national and state levels. State BAM samples are randomly selected from the population of State UI, Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees, and Unemployment Compensation for Ex-Servicemembers payments issued by the state each week. Based on the results of the state BAM audits, the estimated improper payment rates are computed nationally and by state. The amounts that were paid, overpaid, and underpaid are coded for each sample payment and weighted to represent the population of UI claims for all 52 weekly samples in all 52 state workforce agencies participating in BAM (U.S. Virgin Islands is excluded due to its size).
3. **Level of accuracy required for the intended use of the data:** ETA waits until states complete 99 percent of the sampled cases prior to generating the annual improper payment results. Additionally, as required by the Office of Management and Budget, ETA follows the requirement of a 95 percent confidence interval of no more than +/- 3 percent for the estimated improper payment rate.
4. **Limitations to the data at the required level of accuracy:** Estimates based on BAM data are subject to sampling and non-sampling errors that can affect survey data. Sampling error reflects the variability of the estimate due to the fact that only a portion of the population is sampled and audited. Non-sampling error includes operational issues such as failure to include all UI payments in the sampling frame, misapplication of UI law and policy by the BAM auditors, and data entry errors.

5. **How the agency has compensated for such limitations, if needed, to reach the required level of accuracy:** ETA has implemented several quality assurance procedures within the BAM program for reducing non-sampling errors, such as alerts for incomplete or improper sampling frames, system edits to identify interpretation, and/or data entry errors to end users recording audit results into the system.

# Additional Information

## Contributing Programs

Employment and Training Administration (ETA)

## President's Management Agenda

Delivering excellent, equitable, and secure Federal services and customer experiences through Strategies 1, 3, and 4, and Managing the business of Government to Build Back Better through Strategies 1, 2, and 5

## Program Activities

ETA collaborates with the UI Integrity Center to collect and disseminate state best practices, develop tools and resources to support reduction of the UI improper payment rate. The UI Integrity Center provides consultative services to states to develop strategies to reduce fraud and improper payments, operate the IDH that provides states with access to data sources to increase prevention and detection of improper payments and fraud, and provide on-line integrity training for state staff.

## Legislation and Regulations

Under the Social Security Act and the Federal Unemployment Tax Act, the UI program is established as a joint federal-state program. States are required to administer the UI program in conformity with federal requirements including the prevention, detection, and recovery of improperly paid UI benefits.

The requirement to reduce improper payments in the UI program is established in the following laws, policies, and guidance:

1. [Payment Integrity Information Act of 2019](#)
2. [Improper Payment Information Act of 2002, 31 U.S.C. 3321](#);
3. [Improper Payments Elimination and Recovery Act of 2010, 31 U.S.C. 3301](#);
4. [Improper Payments Elimination and Recovery Improvement Act of 2012, 31 U.S.C. 3321](#); and
5. [Office of Management and Budget \(OMB\) Memorandum M-18-20, Requirements for Payment Integrity Improvement, Appendix C to OMB Circular 123](#) (June 26, 2018).

## Policies

The \$2 billion as a part of the American Rescue Plan Act grants broad authority to the Department of Labor to help states to prevent and detect fraud, promote equitable access, and ensure timely payment of benefits.

The Department of Labor has begun to spend this funding by carrying out work on four tracks to address systemic shortcomings in access, based on proven strategies:

1. Direct assistance to the states through "Tiger Teams"
2. Tools to states to help address immediate fraud concerns by facilitating more effective ID verification
3. Developing IT solutions to modernize antiquated state technology by centrally developing open, modular technology solutions that can be adopted by states as needed; and
4. Providing direct grants to states to promote timeliness and equity and fight fraud

Many states had stopped or significantly reduced operation of the RESEA program during the pandemic. Also, states have had to revamp the operation of RESEA to new remote offerings of these services.

### **Stakeholder / Congressional Consultations**

Agencies regularly consult stakeholders including DOL Leadership, Congress, and federal partners on implementing and coordinating outreach and engagement related to the activities mentioned in this APG. DOL will strengthen outreach efforts to stakeholders that serve historically underserved and marginalized communities.