

**REEMPLOYMENT OPERATING SYSTEM (REOS),
SKILLS MATCHING AND REFERRAL TECHNOLOGY
(SMART), AND SOCIAL MEDIA TOOLS
NEW YORK STATE**

**REEMPLOYMENT STRATEGIES “PROMISING PRACTICES” STUDY
PRACTICE SUMMARY:
REEMPLOYMENT OPERATING SYSTEM (REOS), SKILLS MATCHING AND
REFERRAL TECHNOLOGY (SMART), AND SOCIAL MEDIA TOOLS,
NEW YORK STATE**

<i>Project/Practice Name</i>	New York State’s Reemployment Operating System (REOS), Skills Matching and Referral Technology (SMART), and Social Media Tools
<i>Location</i>	New York (Statewide Initiative)
<i>Sponsoring Agency</i>	New York State Department of Labor (NYSDOL)
<i>Principal Contact</i>	Mary K. Kelly, Assistant Director Bureau of Employment and Workforce Opportunities Division of Employment Workforce Solutions (DEWS) Telephone: (518) 457-1154 E-mail: MaryK.Kelly@labor.ny.gov Website: http://www.labor.ny.gov
<i>Project Practice Overview</i>	NYSDOL implemented three practices to better assist UI claimants and other job seekers in securing employment and obtaining workforce development services: (1) the Reemployment Operating System (REOS) is aimed at facilitating communication and data sharing between the One-Stop Centers and the UI program, allowing One-Stop staff to select, schedule, and track UI claimant involvement in reemployment services and report electronically issues that may require adjudication; (2) the Skills Matching and Referral Technology (SMART), a proprietary software application developed by Burning Glass Technologies, is focused on enhancing the quality of the match between a job seeker’s skills/experience (as reflected in their resume) and the job leads provided by NYSDOL via e-mail on a daily or weekly basis; and (3) NYSDOL’s expanded use of various social media applications (including Facebook, YouTube, LinkedIn, Flickr, and Twitter) to increase customer awareness of NYSDOL workforce services and to encourage use of social media by job seekers during the job search process.

A. BACKGROUND

With the surge of UI claimants and other job seekers coming to One-Stop Centers in need of employment and other workforce development services as a result of the deep recession of 2007-08, the New York State Department of Labor (NYSDOL) sought to increase use of automated systems and customer utilization of social media sites (such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and LinkedIn). With unemployment rates (seasonally adjusted) more than doubling in the state (from 4.3 percent in January 2007 to 8.9 percent in January 2010, and continuing to be at more than 8 percent since 2010), the state looked for opportunities to reduce reliance on staff-assisted services and at the same time deliver high quality and timely services to claimants and other job seekers. Through its implementation of the Reemployment Operating System (REOS), the Department sought to better engage UI claimants in reemployment services from the point at which they filed a claim and to allow for easy transmission of data on each claimant between the One-Stop system and the UI program. As discussed below, REOS is an information system that allows for real-time automated selection and scheduling of UI claimants for reemployment services, and then tracks and reports on claimant compliance in undertaking reemployment activities.

In addition to implementing a system for scheduling and tracking reemployment services, NYSDOL was interested in improving skills assessment and automating the process of job matching for the rapidly expanding numbers of claimants and job seekers entering the One-Stop system. NYSDOL contracted with a private sector firm – Burning Glass Technologies – to obtain a software tool – referred to in NY’s implementation as Skills Matching and Referral Technology (SMART) -- that would permit scanning of each job seeker’s resume (or developing a resume if one is not available), followed by immediate automated analyses of the job seeker’s work experience, skills, and abilities for immediate matching of each job seeker to available job openings. NYSDOL wanted to expand the number and types of job openings that job seekers might consider, and place well-matched job openings in the hands of claimants and job seekers early in their unemployment spell (and then, on a continual basis until the job seeker obtains employment).

Finally, NYSDOL was interested in expanding job seeker and claimant use of rapidly developing social media applications to enhance job seeker networking and job search success, as well as to be able to concentrate One-Stop staff time services on those most in need of staff-assisted services. As discussed below in greater detail, NYSDOL officials viewed Facebook and Twitter, for example, as having potential to quickly and inexpensively make announcements of available workforce services to job seekers (e.g., job fairs and employer recruitments) and to address common questions and challenges that job seekers might have concerning available workforce services and securing a job.

The New York State Department of Labor oversees and administers workforce programs, including the Unemployment Insurance (UI), Wagner-Peyser, Workforce Investment Act (WIA), and Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) programs. The WIA program within the state is administered by 33 local workforce investment boards (serving single or in some cases multiple counties), featuring a total of 88 One-Stop centers with co-located Wagner-Peyser and WIA staff. One interesting aspect of New York State's workforce system is that nearly all Wagner-Peyser and UI claimants are co-enrolled in WIA. Claims for unemployment compensation can be submitted either via telephone to NYSDOL's Telephone Claims Center, or via the Internet to the NYSDOL's Online Claims system.

As of June 2012, New York's economy continued to be affected by a high unemployment rate, slightly above that of the nation as a whole. The unemployment rate (seasonally adjusted) plateaued at 8.9 percent in January 2010, and gradually decreased during 2010 and 2011 into the low 8 percent range. However, during the first part of 2012, the unemployment rate for the state has gradually inched upward and has returned to its earlier peak during the recession of 8.9 percent (in June 2012). By county, in June 2012, the unemployment rate (unadjusted) varied from 14.0 percent (in Bronx County) to 7.0 percent (in Hamilton and Putnam Counties). The unemployment rate (unadjusted) for New York City, which substantially affects the overall rate for the state, was 10.3 percent in June 2012. Over the past year, the state experienced a decrease in the number of initial unemployment insurance claims, with claims dropping 8.5 percent (from 92,628 in June 2011 to 84,738 in June 2012). Furthermore, the percentage of job seekers re-entering the labor force, or entering the labor force for the first time, increased 7 percent from June 2011 to June 2012. By comparison, the nation showed a 2 percent increase during the same period.

B. PRACTICE OBJECTIVES AND START-UP

The overall purposes of the three practices highlighted in this summary are to assist unemployed job seekers (particularly UI claimants) to be aware of and secure the employment and other workforce services needed for rapid attachment or reattachment to the labor force. As discussed in greater detail below, the Reemployment Operating System is aimed specifically at improving scheduling of UI claimants for reemployment services and better tracking of claimants' involvement in such services. The second highlighted practice – SMART – is aimed at enhancing matching of UI claimants and other job seekers with available job openings, with a particular focus on systematic automated assessment of job skills and experiences of the job seeker followed by automated matching of the job seeker to available jobs openings. Finally, the third practice is aimed at expanding use of various social media applications by job seekers, which is intended to enhance networking opportunities and job search activities conducted via social media sites, as well as to increase customer awareness of workforce services available through NYSDOL and the statewide one stop system.

C. TARGET POPULATION AND RECRUITMENT/INTAKE PROCESS

REOS is exclusively targeted on UI claimants to schedule claimants for reemployment services and to support tracking and reporting of claimants' involvement in reemployment services. NYSDOL has a policy that all UI work search-required claimants must report within two weeks of UI benefit receipt to a One-Stop Center for assessment and potential referral to reemployment services. If a claimant fails to report for this mandated meeting, One-Stop staff can utilize REOS to re-schedule the claimant for another meeting or record a failure to report (FTR) and place a hold on the claimant's UI benefits. Through REOS, One Stop Center staff are able to place an automated UI control on the individual's benefits which then generates notice to the individual that they must to report to the One Stop Center as a requirement for release of benefits. If/when the individual reports to the One Stop following the FTR hold on benefits, UI staff then adjudicate and make a determination on the FTR issue. Other potential UI issues that arise during this initial meeting (and subsequent meetings) with One-Stop staff are automatically referred through REOS via system generated email (e-forms) to the UI program for adjudication. During this initial meeting and subsequent meetings, One-Stop staff can use REOS to monitor claimant involvement in reemployment services, review and report on job search progress, and as needed, schedule claimants for additional reemployment services (and make such reemployment services optional or required).

The two additional practices highlighted – SMART and use of social media – are more broadly targeted on all job seekers, but also include UI claimants (which account for an estimated 60 percent of job seekers using One-Stop Centers statewide). All new customers (including claimants) entering a One-Stop Center in New York are initially assessed by workforce staff to determine if they are job search ready. If the customer is job search ready, the One-Stop staff person provides a brief overview of SMART and then establishes a SMART account for the individual. If the job seeker already has a resume (which is often the case), his/her resume is uploaded or scanned directly into the SMART system. If the individual does not have a resume, the workforce agency staff person can (with input from the job seeker) use SMART's resume development feature to create a resume directly in the system.

The existence and relevance of the various social media sites are introduced to job seekers and UI claimants during some One-Stop Center orientations and at in-person meetings with workforce development staff at the One-Stop Centers. These discussions occur at varying points in time and are initiated by workforce professionals when appropriate for each job seeker. Job seekers are encouraged to use social media tools, such as LinkedIn and Twitter, for their job search. One-Stops throughout the state also provide various workshops on social media ranging from a basic introduction to how to use social media in the job search process to building

an online brand. These workshops differ from location to location and are dependent on the availability of staff expertise. In some One-Stop Centers, customers are referred to social media workshops provided by partner organizations and community groups if these services are unavailable.

Additionally, a substantial number of claimants and job seekers come to the workforce system already having established accounts with Facebook, LinkedIn, and other social media sites – and are encouraged to follow NYSDOL announcements on Twitter and Facebook, make inquiries using Facebook if they have questions or encounter challenges during work search or in accessing workforce services, and use social media on an ongoing basis in conducting their job search.

D. DESCRIPTION OF PRACTICE/PROGRAM

Reemployment Operating System (REOS). In 2006, NYSDOL developed and implemented the Reemployment Operating System to facilitate communication between the UI and the One-Stop Career Center systems about new and continuing UI claimants, with a focus on scheduling and receipt of reemployment services. REOS is primarily used (1) to provide One-Stop Centers with up-to-date information on UI claimants as needed to support effective reemployment services delivery; (2) on a weekly basis, to identify new UI claimants by One-Stop Center and facilitate scheduling of new UI claimants for reemployment services appointments; (3) to generate correspondence to UI claimants regarding scheduled reemployment services; (4) to track attendance of UI claimants in reemployment services and, if necessary, to place a hold on benefits when claimants fail to report (FTR) for mandated appointments or services; and (5) to track, document, and transmit information on potential issues identified by One-Stop staff to UI staff for adjudication. The system is also used to produce the Reemployment Eligibility and Assistance (REA) program reports and data for submission to USDOL.

Workforce agency staff utilize five major tabs (or screens) within REOS to schedule and track UI claimants' involvement in reemployment services:

- a general customer information screen (or profile page), which provides basic identifiers, demographic information, and UI claims information;
- a customer activity screen, which provides details about reemployment services provided to UI claimants;
- an appointments/correspondences screen, which is used to schedule reemployment activities, including generation of correspondence to notify UI claimants of scheduled activities, track UI participant compliance with mandated activities, and place a hold on UI benefits when appropriate;

- work history screen, which provides data on the claimant’s last employer, last date worked, reason for the separation, and the claimant’s O*NET code;
- UI issues screen, which can be used by workforce agency staff (e.g., at the One-Stop) to report potential issues that may need to be adjudicated, as well as to provide detailed comments on the potential UI issue and supporting documentation.

With REOS’ powerful and flexible search capability, One-Stop staff can search the claimant database to select groups of UI claimants that meet certain criteria for workshops and other services (e.g., identify UI claimants who are veterans and likely to exhaust benefits within a certain zip code to attend a one-day job readiness workshop). One-Stop staff can also use REOS when they are working individually with a claimant to schedule the individual for a specific reemployment service and indicate whether the reemployment service is a required or optional activity. Once claimants are selected for a particular activity or workshop, REOS automatically generates a letter to each individual notifying them of the time and location of the activity, as well as the consequences for not attending the scheduled activity. Additionally, UI and One-Stop workforce staff can use REOS to view background information on each claimant that is helpful for case management purposes and targeting reemployment services on specific needs of the claimant (e.g., contact information, weeks of benefits certified, benefit rate, prior work history, whether the claimant is work search required or exempt, and O*NET code).

Skills Matching and Referral Technology (SMART). NYSDOL initiated the SMART pilot in 2009 to enhance the process of matching One-Stop customers, including UI claimants, to job leads. SMART uses the latest job matching technology, which looks at skill sets and matches a job seeker to a job based on past work experience and skills instead of traditional “keyword” matching. As a result, SMART provides job leads that a customer might not have considered in the past, but are a good fit based on their past work experience and skills. Burning Glass, a private firm, designed the SMART software application and tailored it to specific requirements of NYSDOL. Currently, the SMART website (maintained under contract by Burning Glass) is offered as a staff-assisted tool, though the next step in the development of the system will be to make the system available directly to customers as a self-service tool.

The SMART system automatically reads the job seeker’s resume to identify the broad knowledge, skills, and abilities of the individual based on education, work history, and credentials/accomplishments. Unlike other job matching systems that typically base assignment of appropriate occupational codes on a keyword search of the resume, the SMART system is able to look more broadly at what the job seeker has done in the past and compare the individual to other similar individuals to determine a career trajectory. SMART analyzes each job seeker’s resume and uses a complex algorithm to determine:

- Who is this individual? What have they done in the past?

- How do this individual's skills, experiences, and abilities compare with those of other job seekers?
- And, based on the individual's skills and abilities (in comparison to other similar job seekers), what is the individual's likely career trajectory, and what are the types of jobs/occupations that are potentially a good match for this individual?

Since its inception in 2009, more than 450,000 job seekers in the state have been enrolled in SMART. Once the job seeker's resume is uploaded to and analyzed by SMART, the One-Stop staff person then uses the various functions of SMART: setting up job lead e-mails to be sent to the participant on a daily/weekly basis; conducting a live job search; exploring the "insight tools" to assess how competitive the customer may be for various job listings; and exploring relevant career trajectories and pathways. Use of SMART does not end with the initial visit. Customers are automatically e-mailed on a daily or weekly basis a listing of jobs to which they are best matched. For each job listed, this e-mail shows the job title, employer, location, date of the job order, the first few lines of the actual job posting, a link to the actual job posting, and the strength of the job match for the individual (as determined by SMART, which can be from three to five stars, with five stars indicating a strong match of the individual to the skills required by the job). The customer can click on the link to see the full job posting and if interested can proceed to apply as directed in the job posting. The customer is encouraged to follow-up with staff if they have questions regarding the SMART job leads they are receiving, wish to modify the job search parameters for their matches, update their resume, or discontinue the service for any reason. One-Stop staff are also provided weekly summary reports of the top 10 job leads provided to customers with whom they are working. Staff can choose to follow up with customers to assess the quality of leads, assist with refining the resume, and offer job search assistance or other services. Although SMART is not currently available as a self-service tool, staff may set up customers in resource room computers if a customer is computer savvy and expresses interest in using this tool on his or her own.¹

Social Media Component. The Department's social media strategy is aimed at expanding the use of social media tools and adapting existing technology tools to meet changing needs of job seekers and businesses. NYSDOL was one of the first New York State government agencies to embrace social media tools as a means of improving its outreach efforts to job seekers and businesses, disseminating information to the public, and engaging in direct dialogue with its customers. According to state agency administrators, the development of social media tools was born in part by necessity, as a result of the deep recession in 2007/2008, which resulted in escalating demand for employment and training services provided through the One-Stop system. The state's UI and One-Stop delivery systems did not have the staff available to respond in a timely manner to all of the questions that customers had or to provide staff-assisted services to all of the claimants and other job seekers in need of reemployment assistance. Additionally,

¹ The next implementation of SMART will be as a tool within New York's JobZone application, New York's self-service portal.

the state was serving many unemployed job seekers who had ready access to computers and the Internet (often within their own homes) and were increasingly using social media tools. For example, more than half of the unemployed within the state were under 40 years of age; many have high school diplomas and at least some college; and substantial numbers have recently become unemployed from office and administrative support positions. As a result, state agency administrators viewed expanded use of social media tools as a way to reach out to and serve increased numbers of job seekers without the need of expanding workforce agency staff. NYSDOL is featuring the following tools as part of its social media strategy (which is still evolving):

- **Facebook** -- NYSDOL has dedicated staff to continuously monitor the agency's Facebook page, providing comments and answering questions from customers in real time. The Facebook page has grown into one of the top locations for unemployed New Yorkers to ask questions regarding unemployment insurance. Facebook allows for two-way communication with customers. Additionally, Facebook allows the agency to distribute basic information about the UI system and available services (e.g., how to file a UI claim). An estimated 80 percent of the Facebook traffic to date has been UI-related. The state's Communications Unit (which oversees use of social media) also posts videos and pictures on Facebook. This unit also monitors comments generated by the site, including both positive and negative comments, which can provide valuable feedback for making adjustments and enhancements to the workforce development system.² Typically, statewide, agency staff respond to a half-dozen to a dozen comments a day (although on a busy day, for example after an agency announcement, it may be necessary to respond to as many as 60 to 80 comments). In some instances, it is necessary to obtain input from subject matter experts or the legal counsel within the Department to provide detailed responses to questions. Over time, many of the same questions come up, so it is possible with relatively little staff time to quickly provide canned responses to many of the incoming questions. The agency's Facebook site has grown rapidly since its inception in 2009 to reach over 6,000 Facebook friends, as of July 2012.
- **Twitter** -- NYSDOL employs a Twitter account to make announcements to the public and jobseekers of services and upcoming events, such as job/career fairs and recruitment events. The Twitter account serves primarily as an outreach tool to draw customers to NYSDOL's website. For example, the state regularly uses Twitter to announce the number of job openings currently within the state Job Bank. Currently, NYSDOL uses Tweetdeck to schedule updates to Twitter followers and draw claimants and other job seekers to services provided by the workforce system, as well as to encourage customers to visit the state's website. The state has found that Twitter is also useful in engaging and keeping informed representatives of media outlets, politicians, higher education and other human service agency officials, and employers. The NYSDOL Communication Unit is responsible for overseeing and posting "tweets." Over about two and one-half years of

² The agency does not remove the occasional critical comments that claimants or other users might have concerning the workforce system, finding that that both positive and critical comments can be useful for improving overall operation of the workforce development system.

using Twitter (through July 2012), the NYSDOL Twitter account has accumulated more than 2,700 Twitter followers and issued more than 2,000 tweets.

- **YouTube** -- NYSDOL's YouTube Channel is another social media outreach and informational tool. NYSDOL posts videos on YouTube to attract potential (and existing) customers to the services and resources available through its website (e.g., on-line claims submission) and at its physical locations (e.g., One-Stop Centers). There are also a range of videos developed in-house by NYSDOL that have been posted on YouTube aimed at informing job seekers and employers about services available through the One-Stop system. For example, videos are available for job seekers and claimants on such topics as: *Creating a Resume*; *How to Prepare for a Job Interview*; *How to File for UI Benefits*; and the *One-Stop Center Experience*. There are also informative videos about special initiatives mounted by the workforce agency (e.g., a recent video chronicling the summer youth employment program received over 9,000 views by YouTube users). The state workforce agency partners with other state agencies to share equipment needed to produce videos for uploading to YouTube. NYSDOL produces on average one to two videos per month for uploading. The agency keeps expenses low with regard to producing videos by owning state-of-the-art video equipment and relying on two in-house videographers to film the videos. Typically, the agency does not contract out for production help, writing of scripts, or professional actors. As of July 2012, over 24,000 individuals have viewed uploads to NYSDOL's YouTube site.
- **Flickr** -- NYSDOL also has a Flickr Photostream site where photos from reemployment events and career fairs held throughout the state are posted.³ The agency posts a series of photos in each Flickr album. For example, one album includes several dozen photos from a recent job fair event.⁴
- **LinkedIn** -- Many One-Stop Centers throughout the state use LinkedIn to create job club networking groups among unemployed job-seeking customers (e.g., a local workforce board in upstate New York created the "RochesterWorks! Job Strategy Group," which is a closed LinkedIn group). Some of the One-Stop Centers also offer workshops through LinkedIn to orient UI claimants and other job-seeking customers to creating an online professional profile, develop their "marketable promotional brand," and use the networking and job board tools LinkedIn offers. Job seekers can often benefit from an orientation workshop using LinkedIn and other social media tools, both from the standpoint of being more willing to embrace use of social media, and fully utilizing the networking tools available from the perspective of finding a job (e.g., staying on message and using the leveraging power of social media to identify contacts within firms). The state is also finding that an increasing number of job seekers is coming to the workforce system already registered with LinkedIn and other social media tools, and a working knowledge of how to navigate social media sites (including white and blue collar workers, and young and older workers).

³ At the time of the site visit, NYSDOL was considering moving from Flickr to Instagram to post future photos.

⁴ It is necessary for the agency to obtain a release from those included in photos from such events.

- **Blog** – In the past (though temporarily discontinued), NYSDOL ran a blog entitled, “Labor Buzz.”⁵ The agency’s blog, a one-way form of communication, was used to outreach to UI claimants and other job seekers to highlight job search tips, address FAQ, and provide news updates (e.g., to announce details about an extension to UI benefits). Prior to its hiatus, the blog appeared in the form of a newsletter published as often as once a week to once a month. One agency staff person oversaw and drafted many of the blogs, though the agency also depended upon subject matter experts within the agency to draft or review blogs. WordPress software was used to produce the blog.
- **NYSDOL Website** -- The NYSDOL website (at www.labor.ny.gov) is the hub for all customer information. All marketing and public relations efforts direct New Yorkers to the NYSDOL’s website to acquire specific information on programs and services. In an effort to make the website more user-friendly and to better connect customers with the programs and services they need, the website has been redesigned to reflect the known search patterns of customers. Content has been adapted to redirect specific customer groups (e.g., veterans, trade-affected workers, youth, long-term unemployed) toward program information tailored to meet their specific needs and interests.
- **Social Media Staff Capacity-Building** -- NYSDOL provides a series of webinars on using social media tools to promote effective service delivery to job seeker and business customers. The Web 2.0 webinar series is offered to front line staff, supervisors, managers and partner staff statewide. The series covers Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Blogs, Google Tools, and SlideShare and demonstrates how job seekers, business, and workforce professionals can use these social media tools. NYSDOL also has provided hands-on training at statewide conferences through a Tech Café that includes how to build an online portfolio and how iTunes U (the university/learning specific area on iTunes) can be used by job seekers to keep and improve their job specific skills.

E. USE OF TECHNOLOGY

These three practices feature extensive use of information technology. NYSDOL in-house IT staff (with input from ES, UI, and WIA staff) developed REOS, which operates on a Java2EE platform. A key focus of REOS is on electronically connecting One-Stop Center staff with the UI program so that it is possible for One-Stop staff to select and schedule (and notify) UI claimants for reemployment services, track their involvement in such activities and job search efforts, and report potential issues that might emerge and require adjudication. SMART is an artificial intelligence-based technology that analyzes each job seeker’s skills, abilities, and past job experience and then provides a strength of match of the individual with available job openings within the state’s job bank. Burning Glass Technologies developed SMART as a

⁵ Shortly before the site visit, the blog was discontinued, in part, because of reassignment of the agency staff person who had primarily been overseeing production and writing of the blog. This agency staff person has not been replaced and NYSDOL is in the process of determining whether it has the necessary resources to continue to maintain the blog.

proprietary software application, which is licensed out to NYSDOL (for an annual fee). The social media practice makes extensive use of information technology in the form of existing social media sites, including Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, and Flickr. NYSDOL has also made programming changes to the Homepage of its website to make it more customer friendly and to target content on specific target groups (such as claimants and other special populations) and encouraged use of information technology and social media (versus staff-assisted services).

F. KEY PARTNERS AND LINKAGES

The three practices were undertaken with the cooperation of various NYSDOL divisions and bureaus, particularly the Division of Employment and Workforce Solutions (DEWS). NYSDOL in-house information technology staff were responsible for development of the REOS system, which required extensive programming. Burning Glass Technologies developed the SMART software application and tailored it to the specific needs of NYSDOL. SMART is made available to NYSDOL under a licensing agreement with Burning Glass Technologies.

G. EARLY OUTCOMES/ PERCEPTIONS OF IMPACTS

The state has not conducted impact studies of these three practices. According to state agency staff, the REOS system has been especially helpful in terms of making it possible for One-Stop staff to efficiently schedule and notify UI claimants for reemployment services and keep track of their engagement in mandated activities. Among the most important effects to date of REOS have been the following (according to state agency staff):

- Prior to the implementation of REOS, local (non-NYSDOL) One-Stop Center staff had little access to UI claimant information except for a few data items available in the One-Stop Operating System (OSOS) system (e.g., a check box indicating whether the claimant was profiled likely to exhaust benefits and an indicator of whether the individual was currently claiming benefits or not). With REOS, all One-Stop staff serving UI claimants have access to more information about each UI claimant, including effective date of claim, last certification, number of effective days claimed, benefit rate, and work search exemptions. Also, REOS automates holds on claims for failure to report and automates the process of transmitting potential issues to UI for adjudication.
- As a result of REOS, NYSDOL reports that claimants are more continuously engaged throughout their UI claim period and increased utilization of reemployment services provided through the One-Stop system. Ongoing access to up-to-date status information also allows One-Stops to reengage claimants when they begin certifying again after a

break in a claim (additional or reopened claims) and/or when claimants exceed their expected return to work date if initially identified as temporary or seasonal layoff.

- NYSDOL reports that One-Stop Center and UI staff appreciate the value of REOS and has received many requests to expand REOS or duplicate the features of REOS for use with all One-Stop customers.
- NYSDOL regards REOS as a critical element in achieving USDOL's entered employment performance. REOS is the main tool that allows NYS to implement policies related to expeditious entry of claimants to the reemployment system and early identification of individual needs (i.e., REOS schedules claimants within two weeks for in-person initial assessment at local One-Stops). The system also facilitates continuous engagement of claimants in re-employment services (including providing One-Stops with updated UI claimant status information).
- The REOS system provided the platform needed for NYS to implement, maintain, and expand an effective Reemployment Eligibility Assessment (REA) program. REOS provides the means for REA staff to identify, randomly select, and schedule REA program participants and houses data necessary for NYS to meet the federal REA reporting requirements.

SMART has been implemented in over 80 One-Stop Centers across New York State with over 450,000 customers being enrolled in SMART since 2009. SMART has been well received by both job seekers and One-Stop staff. There is anecdotal evidence from One-Stops that SMART is opening up job seekers to considering job openings and occupations that they might not have otherwise considered. Although not yet systematically evaluated, the state elicited feedback about SMART by sending out a customer satisfaction survey within the customer's job lead emails. This survey, which was fielded for several months, indicated that 11 percent of SMART applicants got an interview as a result of a SMART job lead. Additionally, 14 percent of SMART applicants who had returned to work got their job from a SMART lead. Even if not directly resulting in a job, 21 percent of SMART applicants who had returned to work indicated that SMART was helpful in landing a job. In implementing the SMART website, the NYSDOL has received anecdotal feedback from staff of positive customer service outcomes. For instance, staff report that due to the SMART application, customers feel more involved in their work search and get more personalized job leads because of the advanced search criteria. Additionally, some customers who initially came in to One-Stops feeling hopeless about their job prospects have been encouraged by the number of matched job leads they have been provided. With the next version of SMART, the application and database will be housed internally at NYSDOL, instead of with the Burning Glass vendor. This will allow NYSDOL greater access to system data for evaluation purposes.

With regard to use of social media, NYSDOL is finding that many claimants (and other customers) are now registered with and using (sometimes mostly relying upon) the various social

media sites to learn about available NYSDOL services and to obtain answers to questions or address challenges they may encounter in accessing needed workforce services. The state keeps a tally of users of its social media sites; through July 2012, the NYSDOL Facebook page has over 6,000 fans and continues to grow; there are over 2,700 followers of the NYSDOL Twitter account; and YouTube videos have garnered over 24,000 upload views. The Facebook account has also received many questions and comments, which have been helpful from the standpoint of being able to respond quickly to questions that job seekers might have and to making adjustments to service delivery in response to customer feedback.

H. PROJECT STAFFING

The REOS system required an intensive development effort – 5 FTE staff dedicated to programming from mid-2005 through 2006. Additionally, although not related to the development effort, there is ongoing staffing time expended at the One-Stops in terms of entry of data into REOS for scheduling and tracking of UI claimants involved in reemployment services.

SMART is currently a staff-assisted tool -- the use of the tool has required staff time devoted to an initial assessment, loading customer resumes, and setting customers up to receive e-mail alerts. In the future, this tool will be made available for use directly by customers, which will likely reduce staff time involved in the system. The system was designed and implemented by Burning Glass Technologies – and so, system development staffing time and costs were included in the annual licensing fee for the SMART software (and borne by Burning Glass).

Staffing costs for the social media component are mostly associated with responding to questions that customers have, developing content disseminated through the various social media platforms (e.g., video for YouTube, announcements for Tweeter, responses to questions and other substantive content posted on the Facebook account). For example, several NYSDOL Communication Unit staff are involved part-time in maintaining and developing content for the Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, and LinkedIn websites (estimated at a total of two full-time equivalents (FTEs)). The YouTube site staffing is primarily associated with developing video content – with on average one to two videos developed per month. Two part-time videographers are available to film videos; additional time is expended by NYSDOL staff in developing scripts and, in some cases, participating as actors/performers in the videos.

I. PROJECT COSTS/EXPENDITURES AND FUNDING SOURCES

The original programming for REOS and ongoing operation of REOS (and staff cost associated with REOS) were paid for out of a \$35 million state grant to support reemployment

services (referred to as the State Reemployment Services Fund). NYSDOL officials estimated in-house programming costs of about \$1 million spread over a two-year period for the design of REOS.

The annual licensing costs of SMART (paid to Burning Glass Technologies) have been \$132,000. (Note however that these costs increased substantially for the most recent version of the product which provides major enhancements to the product and will allow NYSDOL to house the database at NYSDOL, integrate the product for self service access within the NYS self service Job Zone application, and expand the tool for use by business customers in search of skilled talent.) There are also additional ongoing staff costs at the local One-Stop level associated with assessment of customers, scanning resumes into SMART, and providing job search assistance/counseling related to SMART job leads (note: estimates of these costs are not available).

There were no developmental costs associated with the social media site, though there are staff-related costs associated with developing content for the various social media sites, particularly with respect to filming videos for the YouTube site and responding to customer questions generated by the Facebook site (note: estimates of these costs are not available).

J. SUSTAINABILITY, REPLICATION, AND LESSONS LEARNED

These three technology-based practices undertaken in New York are fully operational and will continue into the foreseeable future. NYSDOL plans to continue to support and enhance information technologies underlying the REOS and SMART systems as needed, as well as to encourage continued customer use (and expansion) of the various social media websites. NYSDOL agency officials believe that the concepts underlying these three practices are replicable in other states. With respect to the REOS application, interested states would need to carefully analyze the applicability of these practices relative to how their UI, Wagner Peyser, and WIA programs operate and undertake a similar design, development, testing, and implementation process that was undertaken in New York. It should also be noted that REOS application development and ongoing operation have been supported by state grants that may not be available in other states.

With respect to SMART, states could acquire a license to use the SMART software from Burning Glass Technologies and request changes as needed to adapt this application to customer flow and requirements of the state's workforce development and UI data systems.

With regard to use of social media it would be relatively straightforward for other states to encourage use of the various social media websites, though each state would need to invest

staff time and resources in developing state-specific content for each site (e.g., videos for YouTube). Also, states and local workforce agencies would need to invest staff time in encouraging customers to use the various social media sites and provide workshops on effective use of these sites. Of the three practices, the social media sites would be the most straightforward and least expensive to replicate.

