



SIDES and SIDES E-Response Fact Sheet

The Problem

Responding to paper-based unemployment insurance (UI) information requests fully and within tight deadlines creates a significant and costly administrative burden on companies today, putting a strain on the bottom line. This problem is compounded for employers and third-party administrators (TPAs) with operations in multiple states, since – until recently – no single national standard existed to help states and employers easily and electronically exchange key information about UI claims.

The Solution

Developed through a strategic partnership between the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) and state UI agencies, the **State Information Data Exchange System (SIDES)** and **SIDES E-Response** offer employers and TPAs – *free of charge* – a secure, electronic and nationally-standardized format in which they can easily respond to UI information requests, attach documentation when needed and receive a date-stamped confirmation of receipt. Now, employers and TPAs in states implementing the SIDES and SIDES E-Response systems can adopt an electronic standardized format to better anticipate and supply the data needed for UI information requests, reduce follow-up phone calls and streamline their UI response processes, reducing paper work while saving time and money.

The Options

For employers with a limited number of UI claims throughout the year, the **SIDES E-Response** website provides an easy and efficient portal for electronically posting responses to information requests from state agencies. SIDES E-Response is available in participating states to any employer or TPA with internet access.

The screenshot shows the SIDES E-Response website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the SIDES E-Response logo and the text 'UI SIDES State Information Data Exchange System'. Below the navigation bar, there is a section titled 'Separation Information Application Response Entry'. The main content area contains a form with the following fields: State (a dropdown menu), Federal Employer Identification Number, State Employer Identification Number, and Identification Number/Access Code. Each field has a question mark icon to its right. Below the form are 'Cancel' and 'Login' buttons. On the left side of the form, there is a 'Users Guide' link and a note: 'Note: Dashes and/or other punctuation should be omitted from the Federal/State Employer Identification Numbers.' At the bottom of the page, there is a copyright notice: 'Copyright © 2008 - 2011, National Association of State Workforce Agencies. All Rights Reserved.'

SIDES provides a more automated data-sharing and file-tracking interface between employers' IT systems and state agency networks. SIDES is an integrated computer-to-computer interface designed for employers and TPAs that typically deal with a large volume of UI information requests. SIDES is especially helpful to those that operate in multiple states.

SIDES UI Information Flow Process



Both options are completely *free of charge* for employers and TPAs, although there will be internal IT system development costs to integrate SIDES. In addition, both options have multiple layers of security that are implemented to the highest standard, given the sensitive data exchanged between state UI agencies and employers and TPAs.

The Benefits

As of September 30, 2012, 42 states will be using SIDES and SIDES E-Response. Both systems offer an impressive array of benefits and have the potential to significantly improve the UI information exchange process. SIDES and SIDES E-Response give employers and TPAs an electronic way to simplify and streamline responses to UI information requests, saving time and money by:

- eliminating delays related to paper mail delivery, and allowing more time to gather information and respond;
- ensuring more complete information is provided through standard edits, validations and business rules, reducing time-consuming follow up phone calls;
- reducing paper handling, staff time and postage costs; and
- keeping UI tax rates lower by reducing improper payments.

In addition to the significant administrative cost savings offered by SIDES and SIDES E-Response, both options address two of the largest causes of UI overpayments: incorrect initial eligibility decisions (job separation issues) and working while receiving UI benefits.

Many UI overpayments, which could be prevented by receiving timely and accurate information, negatively impact employers' bottom lines. In fiscal year 2011, the UI system paid \$117 billion in federal and state UI benefits to 18.7 million beneficiaries. The USDOL estimates that 12 percent of these benefits were paid improperly.

With this in mind, using SIDES or SIDES E-Response will help employers keep UI rates as low as possible by providing accurate, quality and timely information to state UI agencies.

Additional information is available at <http://info.uisides.org> or contact the Mississippi Department of Employment Security at sides@mdes.ms.gov.

Benefits of SIDES and SIDES E-Response

- ✓ Saves time and money
- ✓ Provided for FREE
- ✓ Reduces staff time
- ✓ Reduces paper work
- ✓ Helps keep UI rates as low as possible by reducing overpayments
- ✓ Provides an electronic, nationally standardized data format
- ✓ Includes data checks to ensure the exchange of complete and valid information
- ✓ Provides tools for a healthier bottom line
- ✓ Reduces follow up requests and phone calls