



ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE
 45 SOUTH FRUIT STREET
 CONCORD, NH 03301-4857



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GEORGE N. COPADIS, COMMISSIONER
 RICHARD J. LAVERS, DEPUTY COMMISSIONER

April 23, 2024

The Honorable Ken Weyler, Chairman
 Fiscal Committee of the General Court
 State House
 Concord, NH 03301

His Excellency, Governor Christopher T. Sununu
 and the Honorable Council
 State House
 Concord, NH 03301

REQUESTED ACTION

Pursuant to RSA 14:30-a, VI, New Hampshire Employment Security (NHES) respectfully requests authorization to accept and expend \$11,250,000 in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) IT Modernization Grant funds from the United States Department of Labor – Employment and Training Administration (USDOL-ETA) to incorporate Application Programming Interfaces (API) driven and Micro-service technologies into the NH Unemployment Insurance System (NHUIS) to increase system agility and resiliency, and to improve customer experience, effective upon Fiscal Committee and Governor and Council approval through June 30, 2025. **100% Federal Funds.**

Funds are to be budgeted in a new accounting unit, NHES, 02-027-027-270010-xxxx0000 as follows:

02-027-027-270010-xxxx0000 Employment Security – UI IT Modernization Funds			SFY 2024		
Class	Account	Class Description	Current Budget	Requested Action	Revised Budget
000	404625	FEDERAL FUNDS	\$0	(\$11,250,000)	(\$11,250,000)
TOTAL REVENUE:			\$0	(\$11,250,000)	(\$11,250,000)
038	509038	TECHNOLOGY-SOFTWARE	\$0	\$11,250,000	\$11,250,000
TOTAL EXPENDITURES:			\$0	\$11,250,000	\$11,250,000

EXPLANATION

NHES is requesting to accept and expend American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) IT Modernization Grant funds from the United States Department of Labor – Employment and Training Administration (USDOL-ETA) to support NHUIS modernization efforts.

New Hampshire was selected as 1 of 18 states to be awarded \$11.25 million from the United States Department of Labor (USDOL) to be used towards continuing to modernize the state’s existing

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unemployment benefits system called the New Hampshire Unemployment Insurance System (NHUIS). The decision by USDOL to select New Hampshire for this competitive grant is recognition of the strong performance of New Hampshire during the pandemic despite historic demand and also the potential for New Hampshire to continue to modernize, enhance and bring in cutting edge technology thereby leveraging prior investments to continue to deliver for the workers and employers of New Hampshire.

Launched in 2009, NHUIS has been in a constant state of enhancement during its entire life because of the dedication of its long time support vendor, SymbioSys Solutions, Inc. (SymbioSys), based out of Nashua along with the federal funding opportunities that New Hampshire has been able to leverage. The latest award of \$11.25 million will allow New Hampshire to modernize the remaining original components of NHUIS while also bringing in the latest technology to enhance the citizen and staff experiences.

First, this funding will allow New Hampshire to enhance the customer and staff user experiences by the creation of dashboards personalized to the role of the user containing the most relevant and most current information together with simplified navigation. This will enhance productivity of staff; will reduce training time for new staff; and will flatten the learning curve for customers newly experiencing the system. This enhancement to user dashboards will also include the switch to near real time batch processing of customer information, thus allowing staff to view near real time information without having to wait until the next batch processing cycle. These enhancements will provide tremendous value to both the staff user as well as the customer.

The Department will also be overhauling the reports module of the system to leverage Data Analytics and Business Intelligence functionality under development. While the implementation of Data Analytics and Business Intelligence is the product of other federal grant funding outside of this request, the integration of this functionality with system reports personalized based upon staff user role will be enabled through this funding stream. While current reporting functionality in the system is robust, it is also static, requiring agency users to constantly have to create and rely upon new system queries to pull data to satisfy ongoing and changing needs. This was certainly on display during the pandemic and if not for the dedication of agency staff working hand in glove with SymbioSys, it would have been impossible for New Hampshire to issue payments so efficiently while also being a national leader in preventing improper payments to bad actors using stolen identities as they tried to access pandemic unemployment funds. Through this phase of the project, the reporting functionality will be more dynamic and relevant to the changing needs of the user.

A further component of this project is the creation of new dashboards and case management functionality for the multiple levels of administrative appeals available to customers. Due to the multiple levels of administrative appeal provided to workers filing claims for benefits as well as employers that fund the benefit system, the system lacks a uniform process to manage these separate but related tasks. This request will allow for the creation of a unified case management system across all levels of administrative appeal, together with dashboards personalized for the staff user role, thereby improving productivity of staff, strengthening the quality of the decisions issued and improving the experience for workers and employers. This will also include improved filing procedures for public users; integration of claim filing processes with staff dashboards and near real time batch processing of newly entered appeal information, thus strengthening the customer experience.

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Additionally, another component of this project based directly upon lessons learned during the pandemic, will be the bundling of decisions affecting a single user as well as incorporation of historical information affecting someone's claim for benefits within the body of the most current decision. A point of frustration for both customers and agency staff during the pandemic was the inability of the original system architecture to allow for decision bundling. This resulted in customers with multiple issues affecting a claim for benefits to receive multiple decisions. While the Department did its best to consolidate these decisions for appeal purposes, this continues to be manually implemented and needs to be modernized. While the Department is currently looking at other projects involving plain language and real time multi directional translation, the ability to consolidate related determinations and always provide a historical summary of other decisions impacting the customer will provide for a more educated customer.

In addition, this project will also include system enhancement to the employer experience when involved with multiple former employees filing for benefits as well as when employers are engaged with the layoff aversion program known as WorkShare. While these processes currently function satisfactorily, it is because of the manual work arounds implemented by staff and their ability to deliver strong customer service despite a lack of cooperation from the benefit payment system. This functionality has long been overlooked due to other higher priority competing demands. These programs connect with every component of the system and are thus, incredibly complex to tackle. The size of this grant award allows for enhancements across the entire system, thus creating the perfect opportunity to tackle this long overdue project.

This project will also include system improvements for staff working in the Local Offices charged with assisting customers with filing for unemployment benefits and connecting with new employment opportunities. Staff have long managed these services through separate case management programs that, while critical for certain federal reporting, also need to be integrated with the unemployment benefits system to allow for more coordinated and robust services. This will include more dynamic scheduling to meet the changing needs of staff; more dynamic work search expectations that meet the current economic conditions; the ability for the system to pivot between virtual and in person sessions; and to allow for the ability of customers to self-schedule required sessions. This will all be able to be managed and tracked by staff through this enhancement within the benefit system and will also allow for the creation of employment services dashboards that are personalized to staff user roles.

These enhancements will also include the launching of visualization tools to assist staff in the detection and prevention of unemployment fraud. The Department was successful during the pandemic in detecting instances of identity theft in order to prevent payments. This success was due to both manual tools as well as system queries. Since the pandemic, the Department has successfully refined system based spidering technology that detects fraud attributes; assigns scoring to indicate levels of severity and alerts staff for investigation. This spidering technology lacks visualization to assist staff to better understand detected fraud markers and fraud patterns. This project will enable the integration of data visualization with the fraud detection system to assist staff in staying ahead of bad actors.

To say NHES is excited by the opportunities created by succeeding in convincing USDOL to award these competitive grant funds would be a huge understatement. This type of opportunity only arises every few decades and through a dedicated team, New Hampshire is poised to get the most from these federal dollars through continued modernization of its existing system to address the needs of customers and staff and

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ultimately create an unemployment system that will continue to be a reliable resource for New Hampshire workers. Through smart and strategic planning, NHES is confident this project will firmly position New Hampshire as a leader in this space. We ask for your favorable consideration of this request to amend the existing 2024/2025 biennial budget to include these project funds.

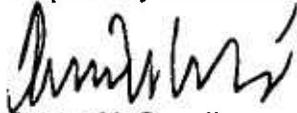
Funds are being budgeted in the classes listed below as follows:

Class 038 Technology - Software funds will be used to develop and implement Application Programming Interfaces (API) driven and Micro-service technologies into the NH Unemployment Insurance System (NHUIS) to increase system agility and resiliency, and to improve customer experience.

These funds were not budgeted because the funds were not anticipated or available during the development of the Department's SFY24/25 biennial budget.

In the event that Federal Funds become no longer available, General Funds will not be requested to support this program.

Respectfully submitted,



George N. Copadis
Commissioner



Award# 23A60UB000109-01-01

FAIN# 23A60UB000109

Federal Award Date: 03/28/2024

Recipient Information	Federal Award Information
<p>1. Recipient Name NEW HAMPSHIRE DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT SECURITY 45 S Fruit St Concord, NH 03301-2410 603-228-4053</p> <p>2. Congressional District of Recipient 02</p> <p>3. Payment System Identifier (ID) ██████████</p> <p>4. Employer Identification Number (EIN) ██████████</p> <p>5. Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) ██████████</p> <p>6. Recipient's Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) ██████████</p> <p>7. Project Director or Principal Investigator Mr. Michael Burke Michael.H.Burke@nhes.nh.gov 603-228-4031</p> <p>8. Authorized Official Mr. George Copadis Commissioner George.N.Copadis@nhes.nh.gov 603-228-4000</p>	<p>11. Award Number 23A60UB000109-01-01</p> <p>12. Unique Federal Award Identification Number (FAIN) 23A60UB000109</p> <p>13. Statutory Authority American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), P.L. 117-2</p> <p>14. Federal Award Project Title FY 2023 ARPA IT Modernization Grant</p> <p>15. Assistance Listing Number 17.225</p> <p>16. Assistance Listing Program Title Unemployment Insurance</p> <p>17. Award Action Type DOL - Other (Non-Monetary)</p> <p>18. Is the Award R&D? No</p>
<p>Federal Agency Information ETA Office of Grants Management</p> <p>9. Awarding Agency Contact Information Mrs. Rabel Bizuayene Grants Management Specialist Bizuayene.Rabel@dol.gov 202-693-3438</p> <p>10. Program Official Contact Information Ms. Tamara Warner Deputy Administrator - OGM warner.tamara.a@dol.gov 857-264-4798</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Summary Federal Award Financial Information</p> <p>19. Budget Period Start Date 04/01/2023 - End Date 09/30/2028</p> <p>20. Total Amount of Federal Funds Obligated by this Action \$0.00</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">20a. Direct Cost Amount \$0.00</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">20b. Indirect Cost Amount \$0.00</p> <p>21. Authorized Carryover \$0.00</p> <p>22. Offset \$0.00</p> <p>23. Total Amount of Federal Funds Obligated this budget period \$11,250,000.00</p> <p>24. Total Approved Cost Sharing or Matching, where applicable \$0.00</p> <p>25. Total Federal and Non-Federal Approved this Budget Period \$11,250,000.00</p> <p>26. Period of Performance Start Date 04/01/2023 - End Date 09/30/2028</p> <p>27. Total Amount of the Federal Award including Approved Cost Sharing or Matching this Period of Performance \$11,250,000.00</p>
<p>30. Remarks</p> <p>1) To amend Part B of the Grant Agreement.</p> <p>2) To incorporate the approved ARPA IT Modernization Full Project Plan in accordance with UIPL No. 11-23. This action satisfies the conditions of award and removes any previous restrictions imposed on the access to funds.</p>	<p>28. Authorized Treatment of Program Income ADDITIONAL COSTS</p> <p>29. Grants Management Officer - Signature Ms. Janice Sheelor Grants Management Officer</p>

