SIDES and SIDES E-Response Frequently Asked Questions

What are SIDES and SIDES E-Response?

Developed through a strategic partnership between the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) and state unemployment insurance (UI) agencies, the State Information Data Exchange System (SIDES) and SIDES E-Response offer employers and third-party administrators (TPAs) a **secure, electronic and nationally-standardized format** to better anticipate and supply the data needed for **responding to UI information requests. FREE OF CHARGE!**

What are the differences between SIDES and SIDES E-Response?

SIDES E-Response is a website that provides an easy and efficient way to respond to UI information requests from state UI agencies.

SIDES is a more automated data-exchange interface between employers' IT systems and SIDES. It is designed for employers and TPAs who typically deal with more than 30 UI information requests per week or those operating in multiple states.

What kind of information is exchanged through SIDES and SIDES E-Response?

UI information related to job separation, earnings verification as well as monetary and potential UI benefit charges.

What are the benefits of using SIDES or SIDES E-Response?

SIDES and SIDES E-Response give employers and TPAs an electronic way to simplify and streamline responses to UI information requests, saving time, staff time, and money by:

- Eliminating delays related to paper mail delivery
- Allowing more time to gather information and respond timely
- Ensuring more complete information is provided through standard edits, validations and business rules,
- Reducing paper handling and postage costs
- Reducing follow-up phone calls
- Streamlining UI response processes

As a result, improper payments are prevented, and employer **UI tax rates are kept as low as possible**.

Who administers SIDES and SIDES E-Response?

SIDES and SIDES E-Response are administered by participating state UI agencies.

What are the requirements to use SIDES and SIDES E-Response?

SIDES E-Response requires only a working internet connection and an employee who will enter the needed information.

SIDES requires programming to connect an employer's or TPA's internal IT system to the SIDES central broker.

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How much does it cost to integrate an employer's or TPA's IT system with SIDES?

Employers and TPAs will need to assess the cost of integrating their IT system with SIDES. The cost will depend on an employer's or TPA's existing system design. SIDES was developed using open source design and follows industry standards.

How much does it cost to use SIDES and SIDES E-Response?

Both systems are offered **free of charge** to employers and TPAs, although there will be internal IT system development costs to integrate SIDES.

How secure are SIDES and SIDES E-Response?

Both SIDES and SIDES E-Response have multiple layers of security. SIDES E-Response uses secure communication protocols, and SIDES requires authentication certificates and uses encrypted records and files. The highest standard of security is important given the sensitive data exchanged between state UI agencies and employers and TPAs.

Which states have adopted SIDES and SIDES E-Response?

As of March 31st 2017, 50 states are using SIDES and SIDES E-Response. To find out if your state is participating, please visit http://info.uisides.org.

What UI system was in place before SIDES and SIDES E-Response?

Before SIDES and SIDES E-Response, state UI agencies requested information from employers and TPAs via a slow, manual, paper-based mail process or fax machine.

What are the main causes of UI overpayments?

The two largest causes of UI overpayments are **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 2015, the UI system paid $32.9 billion in federal and state UI benefits. The USDOL estimates that 10.3 percent of these benefits were paid improperly.

Are SIDES and SIDES E-Response expected to reduce UI overpayments?

Yes. Both options have the potential to reduce UI overpayments while improving the UI information exchange process.

How does an employer or TPA determine which option is best suited for its business?

SIDES E-Response is best suited for employers or TPAs with a limited number of annual UI claims. It requires only a working internet connection and an employee who will enter the needed information. SIDES is best suited for larger employers facing many potential UI claims throughout the year. It provides a more automated data exchange interface between employers' and TPAs' IT systems and state agency networks.

Additional information is available at http://info.uisides.org
To enroll in or register for SIDES, please contact your UI agency.

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