

## **NOTICE OF INTENT FOR A SOLE SOURCE AWARD AND THE EXTENSION OF THE COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT**

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The Employment and Training Administration (ETA) intends to award \$39.6 million in additional funding to the cooperative agreement with the National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA), Center for Employment Security Education and Research (CESER) for continued support for the operations of the Interstate Connection Network (ICON) on a sole source basis.

Since 1983, ETA has provided funding to support an information technology data hub, ICON, to facilitate the exchange of data among State Workforce Agencies (SWAs) in support of their administration of the UI program and to meet statutorily required access to UI wage record data for performance accountability for workforce programs. Currently, NASWA/CESER oversees the day-to-day activities of ICON including managing the procurement of the contractor that operates and hosts ICON.

CESER, a 501(c) (3) entity, incorporated in August 1994 as a subsidiary of the National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA), is a national organization of state administrators of the publicly funded state workforce system and a leading provider of information technology, education, and research support for Unemployment Insurance (UI), workforce development initiatives and activities. NASWA's CESER is uniquely positioned as the states' agent and as an organization with a mission that includes supporting the collective interests of its members, the SWAs.

The ICON hub supports mission critical functions that states must implement to administer the UI programs. ICON's continued operation is critical and cannot cease for even one day without disrupting the ability of states to determine eligibility for unemployment benefits. UI benefits are a critical safety net for unemployed workers who become unemployed through no fault of their own while they are seeking their next job. States access ICON for every UI claim filed in the country in order to access wage and other information to establish eligibility for benefits. An interruption of ICON operations would delay the ability of states to make timely eligibility determinations and make payment of benefits "when due" as required by Federal law, thus creating a disruption in program services and harming unemployed workers and their families who rely on these UI benefits.