SIDES INFORMATION SHEET

What is the State Information Data Exchange System (SIDES)?

SIDES is a convenient and secure way for employers (or their agents) to electronically receive and respond to requests for information regarding unemployment insurance (UI) benefit claims. The best part, it's fast, it's free, and it greatly reduces any forfeiture of rights to protest benefit eligibility or benefit charges! Developed by the U.S. Department of Labor and the National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA), SIDES provides a nationally standardized format for responding to UI information requests.

SIDES E-Response is a secure website designed for employers and/or their agents to respond online to requests for information on benefit claims.

SIDES for brokers is a method for large employers and/or third-party administrator to receive and respond to benefit claim information requests via server-to-server file transfers.

What is a SIDES exchange?

SIDES is compartmentalized into exchanges based on the type of claim issue being investigated or information being requested. Currently Montana has SIDES exchanges available for: Separation information gathering, Monetary and Potential Charging notifications, Earnings Verification reviews, Determinations and Decisions (or Redeterminations), and Additional Fact Finding.

With the implementation of Determinations and Decisions, participating employers can review determination and redetermination notices and electronically request a redetermination or appeal via SIDES. Decisions above the redetermination level are not available through SIDES and will be mailed directly to the parties.

The new Additional Fact-Finding exchange allows for the electronic collection of additional questions or facts regarding a claim or claimant.

How does SIDES E-Response work in Montana?

Our *UI eServices for Employers* (*eServices*) website acts as a doorway into SIDES E-Response. Once you are signed up to participate in SIDES E-Response, you will receive an email when there is a request for information or notification waiting for you. Simply log in to *eServices,* click into your account (the blue account number hyperlink) and navigate to the SIDES Request tab (under Benefits). You'll see any requests or notifications waiting for you and be able to navigate into the SIDES E-Response portal to review and/or respond.

How do I sign-up to use SIDES E-Response?

Login to *UI eServices for Employers* at uieservices.mt.gov and provide us with the name, email address, and phone number for the person(s) responsible for replying to benefit claim information requests. You may list one SIDES contact for all requests OR one contact for each type of request. We encourage the use of group email addresses to ensure timely receipt of notifications. If you have spam filters or blockers on your email account(s) be sure to **add us to your whitelist** (approved senders list). The emails you will receive will be sent from DoNotReply@mt.gov and should have the subject line of Montana Department of Labor & Industry: Request SIDES Information.

Am I required to sign-up for SIDES?

We strongly encourage all employers to utilize SIDES. Using SIDES to respond to benefit claim information requests saves both time and money for Montana employers and the state. It also better ensures the security and accuracy of the information being exchanged. Our goal is to one day have all benefit claim exchanges of information done electronically.

Employers new to Montana UI and existing Montana employers who are new to *eServices* (and not already participating in SIDES), will be required to sign-up for SIDES during the registration and/or access request process on *eServices*. Existing *eServices* users, who are not already participating in SIDES, will be prompted to enroll when you log in to *eServices*. If using SIDES absolutely will not work for your business, you may contact our office to unenroll.

Will I still receive paper notices from UI Benefits?

You might. Not all requests for information can be handled electronically through SIDES. For those that cannot, you will receive paper notices. As Montana and NASWA bring on additional SIDES exchanges, more and more requests will be done electronically reducing the amount of paper notices you'll receive. It is important you continue to respond to all notices timely and appropriately regardless of how they are received.

If I receive a paper notice can I respond to it via SIDES?

No. For claims initiated prior to your enrollment in SIDES and/or issues not currently supported via SIDES, you will need to respond as directed on the paper notice.

What is a SIDES Broker?

A SIDES Broker is typically a large employer or third-party administrator (TPA) who responds to benefit claim information requests on behalf of multiple employers (clients). Instead of logging into a website to receive or respond to requests, electronic files are securely exchanged between brokers and Montana UI.

To exchange data with Montana (via SIDES), brokers are required to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) confirming they are authorized to respond on behalf of the employers they represent. They will also provide us with a list of their clients. Employers who utilize a broker to respond to requests for benefit claim information requests will not receive email notifications regarding the requests.

Becoming a broker does involve system development, testing, and certification coordinated through the national SIDES team with NASWA.

I'm a Third-Party Administrator (TPA) but not a Broker; can I use SIDES to respond on behalf of my clients?

Yes. TPA's who are not SIDES brokers but are authorized to respond to benefit claim requests on behalf of their clients, may utilize *eServices* to link to SIDES E-Response. An authorization form, specifically authorizing *eServices* SIDES access, will be required.

Where can I get more information?

For more information on SIDES and/or how to register, please contact one of our Customer Support Specialists at (406) 444-3834 option 2 or email uieservices@mt.gov.