

APPENDIX C
MASTER SITE VISIT PROTOCOL

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MODULE 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE INTERVIEW AND BACKGROUND

- A. Mathematica and the Urban Institute are conducting an evaluation for the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) about the implementation and effectiveness of the Unemployment Compensation (UC) provisions contained in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) legislation. As part of this study, our research team is visiting your state and 19 others to learn about how states decided which optional provisions to adopt and their experiences implementing all ARRA-related UC provisions. In particular, in our discussion with you today, we'd like to talk about [list the topic(s) relevant to the particular respondent(s)].
- B. [Depending on the respondent(s), the general introduction continues:]
1. According to responses on the UI administrator survey, your state adopted (total unemployment rate [TUR] trigger/ alternate base period (ABP)/Modernization provisions 1–4) and did not adopt (TUR trigger/ABP/Modernization provisions 1–4). [Can reference other details from the UI administrator survey as appropriate.]
 2. During this conversation, we'll go into more detail about the decision to adopt/not adopt these provisions.
 3. Then we'll discuss your experiences implementing these provisions, as well as some other provisions of the Recovery Act, including the Emergency Unemployment Compensation Act of 2008 (EUC08) benefits, federal additional compensation (FAC), suspension of interest payments, and first \$2,400 in benefits tax free.
- C. Background on State Economic and Political Climate
1. Please briefly describe the broad economic trends your state has experienced from late 2007 through today. [*Probes: How did the insured and total unemployment rates change? Were any industries in your state particularly hard-hit by the recession? Was the state in a relatively sound fiscal condition before the recession? (That is, was the state facing a budget crisis?)*]
 2. Please briefly describe the broad political trends your state has experienced from late 2007 through today. [*Probes: Who was the governor and who controlled the state house and senate in late 2007? What political parties were they affiliated with? Did the governorship and/or control of state congress change at any point? How? Did the state secretary of labor and/or deputy in charge of Unemployment Insurance (UI) change over this period?*]
 3. Please briefly describe the history of the state's UI finances starting from late 2007. To what extent has the state borrowed from the Federal Unemployment Trust Fund? How has the level of the trust fund fluctuated?
 4. In the several years before ARRA legislation was passed, was your state changing UI laws in any way, such as to restrict or expand eligibility for benefits, or to increase or decrease benefit generosity? What political and economic factors were associated with starting to take these actions?
 5. What methods of initial and continued claims were used in the state before the recession? [*Probes: Phone (call center), internet, in-person.*] How, if at all, did this change after the recession began? [*Probes: Added some in-person staff at One-Stops, shift from phone filing to more internet filing.*] How many call centers does the state currently have?

MODULE 2: EXTENDED BENEFITS/TUR TRIGGER AND EUC08

A. Introduction and Background

1. Please describe for me your state's experience with the Extended Benefits (EB) program before the 2007 recession. Our notes indicate that your state's last "off" date was [date]. To what extent has your state taken advantage of the EB program in past economic downturns? Why or why not? If EB has triggered on in the past, how has it interacted with emergency benefit programs?
2. Our records indicate that your state triggered on/off EB [describe history during recession]. Please confirm.
 - a. Also, our records indicate that your state triggered on using the TUR [or the insured unemployment rate (IUR)]. If the TUR, our records indicate that your state adopted the TUR trigger on [date]. Please confirm.
3. Did the state enact the optional three-year look-back provision included in the December 2010 legislation? If not, are (were) there plans or legislative proposals to do so?

B. The Decision to Adopt an ARRA-specified TUR Trigger

1. For states that had an ARRA-specified TUR trigger in place before ARRA (if not, skip to 2)
 - a. What considerations influenced adoption of the TUR trigger? When was it adopted?
 - b. How has the look-back provision affected the state's experience triggering on/off EB?
2. For states that adopted the TUR trigger (if not, skip to 3)
 - a. Our records show that you did/did not have the TUR trigger before ARRA. Please confirm.
 - (1) When was it adopted?
 - (2) How important has this been to your state's triggering onto EB?
 - b. What were the key economic and political considerations favoring adoption of the TUR trigger in your state? What were the key considerations against adopting it?
 - (1) Which groups held the different positions? Which particular individuals or groups were the biggest proponents and opponents of adoption? [*Probes: Particular labor unions or advocacy groups? Particular political leaders?*]
 - (2) How much did the prevailing IUR or TUR (that is, the rates themselves) affect the state's decision to adopt the TUR trigger?
 - (3) How much did the potential for an extra seven weeks of EB factor into the decision?
 - c. How much was this policy discussed/debated by the different groups?
 - (1) In your opinion, was this policy controversial or were parties in general agreement?
 - (2) How long did debate/discussion take before agreement was reached to adopt the TUR trigger?
 - d. What effect was adopting the TUR trigger *predicted* to have on the state's triggering on to EB?
 - e. Assuming the likelihood was that the state would trigger on to EB, what was the *predicted* effect on the number of EB claimants?

- (1) On what basis were these predictions made?
 - (2) Did different groups have different predictions?
 - (3) Was a reconciliation reached?
 - f. What is the likelihood that the state will retain the TUR trigger for EB when the federal government ceases to pay 100 percent of EB? Why?
 - (1) Was the legislation written to sunset the TUR? How was this structured?
 - (2) Why is the state opposed to retaining the TUR trigger?
 3. For States that Did Not Adopt the TUR
 - a. Our records indicate that you currently have the [optional 6 percent IUR or regular IUR] trigger. Please confirm. [If the state has the optional 6 percent IUR, continue; else skip to 3.b.]
 - (1) When was it adopted? What were the main reasons for adopting it?
 - (2) How important has this been to your state's triggering onto EB?
 - b. What were the key economic and political considerations favoring adoption of the TUR trigger in your state? What were the key considerations against adopting it?
 - (1) Which particular groups or individuals held these positions? [*Probes: Particular labor unions or advocacy groups? Particular political leaders?*]
 - (2) How much did the IUR or TUR (that is, the actual rate) affect the state's decision not to adopt the TUR trigger?
 - (3) What was the *prediction* of the likelihood of triggering on to EB with the TUR trigger? On what were these predictions based?
 - c. How much was this policy discussed/debated by these different groups? Please explain the history.
 - (1) In your opinion, was this policy controversial or were parties in general agreement?
 - (2) How long did debate/discussion take before agreement was reached to not adopt the TUR trigger?
 - (3) Has adoption of the TUR trigger been discussed at more than one point in time, or was the decision not to adopt more or less final?
- C. Implementation of EB/TUR Trigger (skip if TUR not adopted and EB not triggered on)
1. TUR trigger implementation (if TUR trigger adopted post-ARRA)
 - a. When was the TUR trigger first made effective?
 - b. What influenced the timing of implementation (for example, need to update computer/accounting systems to process EB)? Was there a delay in putting the TUR trigger in place? If so, why?
 - c. With the adoption of the TUR trigger, what changes to IT systems had to be made? How were these changes accomplished, and in what time frame?
 2. EB implementation (if triggered on during recession, whether through TUR or IUR trigger)
 - a. In what ways did the state prepare for the implementation of the EB?
 - (1) Were any staff retrained or were there new hires? If so, please explain the need for retrained or new staff, and the extent of the need.
 - (2) What computer changes had to be made, if any?

- (3) What processes were developed to monitor EB claimants' job search activities? Does your state accept electronic declarations of work search? How are declarations verified?
 - (4) How was information on EB distributed to claimants who had already exhausted other benefit entitlements but were eligible for benefits under EB?
 - (a) Which staff were responsible for this?
 - b. How did use of EB change or affect the administration of eligibility reviews and reemployment services, including reemployment eligibility assessments, if at all?
 - (1) How were eligibility reviews administered after the state triggered onto EB? [*Note that several states no longer report conducting eligibility reviews.*]
 - (2) How was this different from how they were administered before the state triggered onto EB? [*Probes: Were resources shifted away from administering these to handling the increased flow of claimants, or was there basically no change?*]
 - (3) How were services to connect customers with available reemployment services, including reemployment eligibility assessments, administered after the state triggered onto EB?
 - (4) How was this different from how they were administered before the state triggered onto EB? [*Probes: Were resources shifted away from administering these to handling the increased flow of claimants, or was there basically no change? Did the state have a Reemployment Eligibility Assessment (REA) grant that made it unnecessary to transfer resources away from conducting them?*]
 - c. How did triggering on to EB affect referrals to reemployment services under Wagner-Peyser and referrals to training under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA)?
 - (1) How were referrals handled under EB?
 - (2) How is this different from how referrals were handled *before* implementation of EB? [*Probes: Were they "soft" referrals given out by call-center staff as part of their script? Was information sent to claimants' homes? Did One-Stop or other workforce staff directly contact claimants?*]
 - d. In general, how were front-line staff affected by the EB program?
 - (1) Did they have to be trained on the EB program? If so, which staff were trained, and how was the training accomplished? [*Probes: a single training for state-wide staff, on-site training in call centers*] In what time frame was training conducted?
 - (2) To what extent were staff overburdened by the number of claims/claimants or the need to process paperwork?
 - (3) What strategies were used to alleviate the extra workload caused by administering EB?
 - e. Was there an increase in overpayments as a result of EB? If so, please explain why.
 - (1) What was the extent of the problem?
 - (2) What were common ways by which overpayments arose?
 - (3) How was that money recouped?
 - f. Did the implementation of EB affect staff's ability to meet other performance targets? If so, please describe.
3. Assessment
 - a. In the end, to what extent had the state foreseen the various implementation issues and how prepared were administrators and staff?
 - (1) What issues were unexpected?
 - (2) How were they resolved?
 - b. What were the key challenges to triggering on and off EB?

- c. In general, what is the state's assessment on whether the benefits of triggering on to EB outweighed the challenges/costs?
 - (1) What were the key benefits of triggering on to EB? [*Probe: additional UI benefits*]
 - (2) What were the key challenges? [*Probes: Strain on staff, processing paperwork, information technology (IT) changes.*]
 - (3) How did the state/staff overcome any challenges?

D. Implementation of EUC08

1. Introduction

- a. Our records indicate that [insert general description of which tiers the state has triggered on/off since EUC08 was enacted].

2. General implementation issues

- a. The initial EUC08 legislation was authorized in July 2008. How long did it take your state to implement EUC08?
- b. What influenced this timing? What did the state have to do to prepare?
 - (1) What changes to IT systems had to be made in order to implement EUC08? How were these changes accomplished and in what time frame?
 - (2) Did existing front-line staff have to be retrained? If so, which staff? On what? How was the training accomplished and in what time frame? [*Probes: a single training for state-wide staff, on-site training in call centers*]
 - (3) Were new staff hired? If so, please explain the extent of the new hires and their roles.
- c. How was information distributed to claimants who had already exhausted regular UI but were eligible for additional benefits under EUC08? To what extent did the information reach the claimants affected?
- d. How did the triggering on and off of various EUC08 tiers as additional legislation was passed and claimants in the state became eligible for additional benefits affect the state's implementation of EUC08?
 - (1) What challenges did the state encounter?
 - (2) How did the changes enacted by the successive federal legislative actions affect the state's implementation of EUC08? For instance, in periods when new EUC08 claims were not accepted (April, June–July, and November–December 2010), were claimants encouraged to continue filing so that retroactive payments could be made easily? Were claimants encouraged to file for EB during these periods?
- e. How did use of EUC08 change or affect the administration of eligibility reviews and reemployment eligibility assessments, if at all?
 - (1) How were eligibility reviews administered after EUC08 began? [*Note that several states no longer report conducting eligibility reviews.*]
 - (2) How was this different from how they were administered before EUC08 began?
 - (3) How were reemployment eligibility assessments administered after EUC08 began?
 - (4) How was this different from how they were administered before EUC08 began?
- f. How did use of EUC08 affect referrals to reemployment services under Wagner-Peyser and referrals to training under WIA?
 - (1) How were referrals handled after EUC08 began?
 - (2) How was this different from how referrals to reemployment services under Wagner-Peyser and to training under WIA were handled *before* implementation of

EUC08? *[Probes: Were they “soft” referrals given out by call-center staff as part of their script? Was information sent to claimants’ homes? Did One-Stop or other workforce staff directly contact claimants?]*

- g. How did the implementation of EB affect staff’s ability to meet performance targets? Please describe.
 - h. Was there an increase in overpayments as a result of EUC08? If so, please explain why.
 - (1) What was the extent of the problem?
 - (2) What were the main reasons why overpayments were made?
 - (3) How was that money recouped?
 - i. How effective was the “EUC fix” in keeping claimants at the higher federal benefits?
 - j. We understand that your state received \$*[insert amount]* from USDOL for implementation of EUC08. Did your state use all these funds? Why or why not?
3. Assessment
- a. In the end, to what extent had the state foreseen the various implementation issues? How prepared were administrators and staff?
 - (1) What issues were unexpected?
 - (2) How were they resolved?
 - (3) To what extent were these issues compounded/affected by the exclusive use of Call Centers and the Internet to communicate with claimants?
 - b. What, if any, particular plans or activities were delayed or cancelled to handle EUC08 and the extra volume of claims?
 - c. What other, if any, implementation and administrative issues did the state encounter? Please explain.
 - d. In general, what were the key benefits of triggering on to EUC08? What were the key challenges? How were staff able to overcome these challenges?
 - e. *[If state triggered onto Tier III or IV at any point]* What were the key benefits of triggering onto Tier III *[and IV]* of EUC08? Were there additional challenges associated with this? How were staff able to overcome these challenges?
- E. Interplay between EUC08 and EB (Skip if did not trigger on to EB)
- 1. Many states had not paid EB for many years. What, if any, additional implementation or operational issues arose with implementing EB because of the EUC08 program?
 - a. Were technical issues, such as making changes to IT systems, made more challenging by implementing both EB and EUC08? If so, how?
 - b. Was the training of staff made more challenging? How so?
 - c. Were there difficulties informing regular UI exhaustees about their eligibility for the various types of benefits? If so, please describe.
 - d. What, if any, were the additional challenges in the flow and processing of claims?
 - 2. What were the operational advantages to implementing both EB and EUC08? *[Probes: Technical issues easier to resolve/staff retrained using existing materials/easier to inform exhaustees about their eligibility for benefits/less challenging to handle the increased flow of claimants through EB since EUC08 had already been in place.]* Please explain.
 - 3. What were the disadvantages? Please explain.

4. How did the state triggering on and off various EUC08 Tiers affect the interplay between EUC08 and EB? [*Probes: did it make it more challenging?*]
5. What recommendations, if any, would you have for improving the reporting mechanisms for EUC and EB? What suggestions would you have for coordinating the data reporting between different EUC tiers, as well as EUC and EB?
6. What lessons can be learned for the future from the interactions between the two federal extension programs?

MODULE 3: UI MODERNIZATION PROVISIONS

- A. Introduction: According to our records, your state adopted or already had [note whether ABP adopted and which modernization provisions, if any].
- B. Decision to Adopt Alternate Base Period
1. States that had an existing ARRA-specified ABP (and did not have to make any changes (if not, skip to 2))
 - a. Our records indicate that your state adopted [a regular base period that includes the most recently completed calendar quarter before the start of the benefit year/ an ABP that includes the most recently completed calendar quarter, when the claimant cannot meet monetary qualifying requirements using a “regular” base period that excludes this quarter], and that this ABP was adopted in [year]. Is that correct?
 - b. To your knowledge, why did the state adopt the ABP?
 - (1) What were the key considerations supporting adoption of the ABP at that time? Who were the key supporters of this legislation? Who were the detractors? What were their objections?
 - (2) How would you describe the process of adopting the legislation at that time (for example, contentious debate, little discussion at all, or widespread agreement)?
 - c. Our records show that your state’s application for one-third funds was submitted on [date].
 - (1) Was there any discussion of **not** applying for one-third incentive funds, even though the state already had a required ARRA-specified ABP in place? If so, what were the key reasons to consider not applying? What particular groups or individuals held these views?
 - (2) Were there any problems gathering the information necessary to submit an application to DOL for approval?
 - (3) Were there any problems acquiring DOL approval of the application (for example, additional supporting documentation had to be submitted)?
 2. States that made **changes** to an existing ABP in order to meet ARRA requirements (if not, skip to 3)
 - a. What ABP did your state use before ARRA? Why was your state already using an ABP?
 - b. What changes had to be made to the existing ABP in order to qualify for the first one-third of UI Modernization incentive funds?
 - c. Our records indicate that your state adopted [a regular base period that includes the most recently completed calendar quarter before the start of the benefit year/ an ABP that includes the most recently completed calendar quarter, when the claimant cannot meet monetary qualifying requirements using a “regular” base period that excludes this quarter], and that this ARRA-specified ABP was adopted [year]. Is that correct?
 - d. How would you describe the process of adopting the legislation (for example, contentious debate, little discussion at all, or widespread agreement)?
 - (1) What were the key economic and political considerations in favor of making these changes to existing legislation? Which groups supported the revisions? Why?
 - (2) What were the key economic and political considerations against making these changes? Which groups opposed the changes? Why?

- (3) How did the offer of modernization incentive funds figure into the state's decision to adopt? Would other incentives have been more persuasive? If so, how and which ones?
 - e. About how long did this decision process take?
 - f. How was the adoption of an ARRA-specified ABP *predicted* to change the number of individuals meeting the monetary eligibility condition? On what were these predictions based?
 - g. How was the adoption of an ARRA-specified ABP *predicted* to affect nonmonetary determinations? [*Probes: Why was it expected to increase/decrease?*] On what were these predictions based?
 - h. Our records show that your state's application for one-third funds was submitted on [date].
 - (1) Were there any problems gathering the information necessary to submit an application to DOL for approval?
 - (2) Were there any problems acquiring DOL approval of the application (for example, additional supporting documentation had to be submitted)?
3. States that enacted **new legislation** to adopt an ARRA-specified ABP (if not, skip to 4)
- a. Our records indicate that your state adopted [a regular base period that includes the most recently completed calendar quarter before the start of the benefit year/ an ABP that includes the most recently completed calendar quarter, when the claimant cannot meet monetary qualifying requirements using a "regular" base period that excludes this quarter], and that this ARRA-specified ABP was adopted [year]. Is that correct?
 - b. To what extent had adopting an ABP been discussed by the state before the ARRA modernization provisions? In your opinion, why or why not has it been part of the discussion of the state's UC program?
 - c. How would you describe the process of adopting the legislation following ARRA (for example, contentious debate, little discussion at all, or widespread agreement)?
 - (1) What were the key economic and political considerations in favor of adopting new legislation so that the state would be eligible for one-third modernization incentive payments? Which groups supported these positions? Why?
 - (2) What were the key economic and political considerations against adopting new legislation? Which groups held these positions? Why?
 - (3) How did the offer of modernization incentive funds figure into the state's decision to adopt? Would other incentives have been more persuasive? If so, how and which ones?
 - d. About how long did this decision process take?
 - e. How was the adoption of an ARRA-specified ABP *predicted* to change the number of individuals meeting the monetary eligibility condition? On what were these predictions based?
 - f. How was the adoption of an ARRA-specified ABP *predicted* to affect nonmonetary determinations? [*Probes: Why was it expected to increase/decrease?*] On what were these predictions based?
 - g. Our records show that your state's application for one-third funds was submitted on [date].
 - (1) Were there any problems gathering the information necessary to submit an application to DOL for approval?

- (2) Were there any problems acquiring DOL approval of the application (for example, additional supporting documentation had to be submitted)?
4. States that **did not adopt** an ARRA-specified ABP
- a. To what extent had adopting an ABP been discussed by the state before the ARRA modernization provisions? In your opinion, why or why not has it been part of the discussion of the state's UC program?
 - b. Why did your state decide not to adopt an ARRA-specified ABP?
 - (1) What were the key economic and political considerations against adopting new legislation to make the state eligible for the first one-third modernization incentive payments? Which groups opposed adoption? Why?
 - (2) Were there any economic and political considerations in favor of adopting the ABP? If so, what were they? Who supported adopting the ABP? Why?
 - c. Was an attempt made to introduce new legislation? If so, how did that effort fare? If it died in the legislature, how far did it make it (for example, never made it out of committee, made it to the floor but was not put for a vote, was put to a vote and failed)? What was the key reason it failed?
 - d. In general, how would you describe the debate/discussion in the state about the ABP following ARRA (for example, contentious debate, little discussion at all, or widespread agreement)?
 - e. How did the offer of modernization incentive funds figure into the state's decision to adopt? Would other incentives have been more persuasive? If so, how and which ones?
- C. Implementation of the ABP (If received one-third funds, continue. Else, skip.)
1. What were the one-third share modernization incentive payments used for (for example, replenish trust fund, IT upgrades, retrain staff)?
 - a. To what extent did the one-third funds affect the state's UI trust fund borrowing?
 2. What changes to IT and data systems had to be made in order to implement the ABP? How long did that take?
 3. Did front-line staff have to be retrained? If so, which staff were trained, on what, and how was the training accomplished? How long did the training take?
 4. How, if at all, was information on the ABP distributed to claimants whose monetary eligibility was affected under the ABP?
 5. What was the effect on claims processing?
 - a. How was the flow and processing of initial claims affected? How did the number of claimants eligible as a result of adopting the ABP change?
 - b. Was this change expected? Why or why not?
 - c. Was there an increase in the rate of denial of benefits based on nonmonetary eligibility? [*Probes: With additional claimants meeting monetary eligibility requirements under the ABP, was there a corresponding increase in denials based on nonmonetary eligibility, or was it more or less the same?*]
 - d. How did the ABP affect the flow and processing of continued claims?

6. Did challenges by employers to workers' eligibility for benefits increase? Please explain.
 7. Your state's responses on the UI administrator survey indicated that the estimated costs were [insert response] and that factors [insert factors] went into that calculation.
 - a. What were the key cost factors associated with the implementation of the new/revised ABP provision? [*Probes: Costs for IT upgrades, staff retraining, administrative costs, additional benefits paid out for those eligible under the ABP*]
 - b. How did actual costs compare with estimated or predicted costs? If there was a discrepancy between the two, what accounts for this?
How much of the costs were offset by the incentive payments?
 8. About how long did it take to implement the ABP? How much time elapsed between when the state enacted the ABP legislation and when it was implemented? What factors caused the delay in implementation? Why?
 9. What is the likelihood that your state will eventually revise or repeal the ABP? Why? Is there discussion about this already? If so, who is leading this effort and what are the key reasons for doing so?
- D. Decision to Adopt Other ARRA-specified UI Modernization Provisions
1. States that **did not ever adopt** the other modernization provisions (If adopted, skip to 2)
 - a. To what extent had adopting any of the four provisions been discussed by the state before the ARRA modernization provisions? In your opinion, why or why not has it been part of the discussion of the state's UC program?
 - b. Why did your state elect not to adopt two of the four UI modernization provisions?
 - (1) What were the key economic and political considerations against adopting legislation to make the state eligible for the additional two-thirds of UI modernization incentive payments? Which groups opposed the change? Why?
 - (2) Were there any economic and political considerations in favor of adopting the provisions? If so, what were they? Who supported adopting the provisions? Why?
 - (3) How did the offer of modernization incentive funds figure into the state's decision to adopt? Would other incentives have been more persuasive? If so, which ones and how?
 - c. Was an attempt made to introduce legislation to adopt modernization provisions or change existing provisions to meet ARRA requirements? If so, why was the effort unsuccessful? If legislation died in the legislature, how far did it advance (for example, never made it out of committee, made it to the floor but was not put for a vote, was put to a vote and failed)? What was the key reason it failed?
 - d. In general, how would you describe the debate/discussion in the state about the adoption of the 2-of-4 provisions following ARRA (for example, contentious debate, little discussion at all, or widespread agreement)?
 2. States that **already had one or both ARRA-specified provisions in place (no modifications)** (if not, skip to 3)
 - a. Our understanding is that your state had in place (part-time/training/dependent allowance/compelling family reason) [and (part-time/training/dependent allowance/compelling family reason)]

- b. Our records indicate that your state's [Provision 1] was adopted in [year]. *[To interviewer: Note that the date might not be definite in the minds of the state interviewees. There might not have been a state law but an administrative directive or a court decision.]*
- (1) What were the key considerations supporting adoption of [Provision 1] at that time? Who were the key supporters of this legislation (or administrative change)?
 - (2) How would you describe the process of adopting the legislation (or administrative change) at that time (for example, contentious debate, little discussion at all, or widespread agreement)? [If state already had [Provision 2], continue. Else, skip to 3.]
- c. Our records indicate that your state's [Provision 2] was adopted in [year].
- (1) What were the key considerations supporting adoption of [Provision 2] at that time? Who were the key supporters of this legislation (or administrative change)?
 - (2) How would you describe the process of adopting the legislation (or administrative change) (for example, contentious debate, little discussion at all, or widespread agreement)?
- d. Was there any discussion of **not** applying for the additional two-thirds incentive funds, even though at least one of the provisions was already in place? If so, what were the reasons for not applying? (If already had adopted both provisions, continue. Else, skip to 3.)
- e. Our records show that your state's application for two-thirds funds was submitted on [date].
- (1) Were there any problems gathering the information necessary to submit a complete application to DOL for approval?
 - (2) Were there any problems acquiring DOL approval of the application (for example, additional supporting documentation had to be submitted)?
3. States that **newly adopted or modified at least one** ARRA-specified modernization provision (complete 3 through 5)
- a. Our understanding is that your state adopted (part-time/training/dependent allowance/compelling family reason) [and (part-time/training/dependent allowance/compelling family reason)]. Although we will talk more specifically about these provisions in a moment, we would first like to discuss the joint decision to adopt 2-of-4 modernization provisions and apply for the two-thirds share of modernization incentive payments.
 - b. What were the general considerations in favor of pursuing two-thirds incentive payments, knowing that new legislation would have to be enacted in order to obtain the funds (for example, desire to replenish UI trust fund, expand pool of eligible claimants during recession)?
 - (1) Which groups supported pursuing two-thirds incentive payments? Which opposed it? What were their objections?
 - (2) Would other incentives have been more persuasive? If so, which ones and how?
 - c. How would you describe the debate/discussion about pursuing two-thirds incentive payments (for example, contentious debate, little discussion at all, or widespread agreement)?
 - d. Why did your state pursue adoption of (part-time/training/dependent allowance/compelling family reason) and not (part-time/training/dependent allowance/compelling family reason)? In general, what calculations were made to determine which provisions to adopt over others? Who made these calculations?

- (1) Were some provisions easier to adopt than others? (That is, did some require only slight modifications to existing law, such as a revision to your state's definition of part-time work?) Which ones?
 - (2) Were some provisions determined to be too difficult to adopt? Which ones? Why?
 - (3) Were some provisions determined more expensive to adopt than others? Which ones? Please explain.
- e. How would you describe the process of selecting which provisions to adopt?
- (1) Were discussions/debates about certain provisions more contentious than others? Why?
 - (2) Did different groups/stakeholders have different opinions about which provisions to adopt than others? Please describe.
 - (3) How were the issues resolved?
- f. Were there any problems gathering the information necessary to submit a complete application to DOL for approval?
- g. Were there any problems acquiring DOL approval of the application (for example, additional supporting documentation had to be submitted)?
4. Provision 1 (part-time/training/dependent allowance/compelling family reason)
- a. Made **change** to existing legislation (if not, skip to b)
- (1) What was your existing legislation (with regard to this provision)? Why did you already have this provision in your UI laws? When was it enacted?
 - (2) What revisions had to be made to the existing [Provision 1] in order to qualify for the two-thirds share of UI modernization incentive funds? (For example, did you have to change your state's definition of part-time work slightly?)
 - (3) What were the key economic and political considerations in favor of making the changes to existing [Provision 1] legislation necessary so that the state would be eligible for two-thirds incentive payments? Which groups held these positions? Why?
 - (4) What were the economic and political considerations against making this change? Which groups held these positions? Why?
 - (5) [If Provision 1 is part-time, family reasons, or training] What effects were the changes to [Provision 1] *predicted* to have on the number of eligible claimants? On what were these predictions based? What was that predicted to translate into in terms of additional benefit dollars paid out?
 - (6) [If Provision 1 is dependency allowance] What percentage of UI claimants did the state predict [Provision 1] would affect? On what were these predictions based? What was that predicted to translate into in terms of additional benefit dollars paid out?
- b. Adopted **new legislation**
- (1) What were the key economic and political considerations in favor of adopting new [Provision 1] legislation so that the state would be eligible for the two-thirds incentive payments? Which groups held these positions?
 - (2) What were the key economic and political considerations against adopting [Provision 1] legislation? Which groups held these positions?
 - (3) How would you describe the process of adopting the [Provision 1] legislation (for example, contentious debate, little discussion at all, or widespread agreement)?

- (4) [If Provision 1 is part-time, family reasons, or training] What effects were the changes to [Provision 1] *predicted* to have on the number of eligible claimants? On what were these predictions based? What was that predicted to translate into in terms of additional benefit dollars paid out?
 - (5) [If Provision 1 is dependency allowance] What percentage of UI claimants did the state predict this provision would affect? On what were these predictions based? What was that predicted to translate into in terms of additional benefit dollars paid out?
5. Provision 2 (part-time/training/dependent allowance/compelling family reason)
- a. Made **change** to existing legislation (if not, skip to b)
 - (1) What was your existing legislation (with regard to this provision)? Why did you already have this provision in your UI laws? When was it enacted?
 - (2) What revisions had to be made to the existing [Provision 2] in order to qualify for the two-thirds share of UI modernization incentive funds?
 - (3) What were the key economic and political considerations in favor of making the changes to existing legislation necessary so that the state would be eligible for two-thirds incentive payments? Which groups held these positions? Why?
 - (4) What were the key economic and political considerations against making this change? Which groups held these positions? Why?
 - (5) [If Provision 2 is part-time, family reasons, or training] What effects were the changes to [Provision 2] *predicted* to have on the number of eligible claimants? On what were these predictions based? What was that predicted to translate into in terms of additional benefit dollars paid out?
 - (6) [If Provision 2 is dependency allowance] What percentage of UI claimants did the state predict this provision would affect? On what were these predictions based? What was that predicted to translate into in terms of additional benefit dollars paid out?
 - b. Adopted **new legislation**
 - (1) What were the key economic and political considerations in favor adopting [Provision 2] legislation so that the state would be eligible for the two-thirds share of incentive payments? Which groups held these positions?
 - (2) What were the key economic and political considerations against adopting [Provision 2] legislation? Which groups held these positions?
 - (3) How would you describe the process of adopting the [Provision 2] legislation (for example, contentious debate, little discussion at all, or widespread agreement)?
 - (4) [If Provision 2 is part-time, family reasons, or training] What effects were the changes to [Provision 2] *predicted* to have on the number of eligible claimants? On what were these predictions based? What was that predicted to translate into in terms of additional benefit dollars paid out?
 - (5) [If Provision 2 is dependency allowance] What percentage of UI claimants did the state predict this provision would affect? On what were these predictions based? What was that predicted to translate into in terms of additional benefit dollars paid out?
- E. Implementation of the ARRA-specified UI Modernization Provisions (part-time/training/dependent allowance/compelling family reason) (Skip if none were adopted)
1. General questions

- a. What were two-thirds incentive payments used for? *[Probes: For example, replenish trust fund, IT upgrades, retrain staff, hire additional staff, expand call centers, other UI administrative uses, Employment Services (ES) administration, labor market services such as training and assessment?]* How was the use of the two-thirds funds different, if at all, from how the state spent the one-third funds?
 - b. To what extent did the two-thirds incentive funds affect the state's UI trust fund borrowing? Please explain.
 - c. As a result of Provision 1 or Provision 2, was there an increase in challenges by employers to workers' eligibility for benefits? *[Probe particularly for the part-time and compelling family reasons provisions.]* How did these provisions affect employers' challenges?
 - d. As a result of Provision 1 or Provision 2, was there any increase in fraud?
 - (1) If so, please explain how the particular provision(s) affected fraud cases.
 - (2) If so, please describe the types of fraud detected, quantify them, and describe how they were detected.
 - (3) Differentiate the effect on fraud of the two provisions implemented.
2. Provision 1: (for those states that did not already have an ARRA-specified Provision 1)
- a. What changes to IT and data systems had to be made in order to implement the provision? Why? How long did that take?
 - b. Did front-line staff have to be retrained? If so, which staff were trained, on what, and how was the training accomplished? How long did it take?
 - c. How was information distributed to claimants who were newly eligible or eligible for higher weekly benefits under [Provision 1]? How effective was the distribution of the information in reaching affected claimants? Why?
 - d. What was the effect on claims processing?
 - (1) How was the flow and processing of initial claims affected? How many additional claimants became eligible as a result of adopting [provision 1]?
 - (2) How was this different from what had been predicted? Why?
 - (3) Was there an increase in the rate of denial of benefits or was it more or less the same?
 - e. What was the effect on the total amount of benefit dollars paid out?
 - (1) How was this different from what had been predicted? Why?
 - f. Your state's responses on the UI administrator survey indicated that the estimated costs were [insert response] and that factors [insert factors] went into that calculation.
 - (1) What were the key cost factors associated with the implementation of [Provision 1]? (2.5) *[Probes: Costs for IT upgrades, staff retraining, administrative costs, additional benefits paid out for those eligible under the provision.]*
 - (2) How did actual costs compare with estimated or predicted costs? If there was a discrepancy between the two, what accounts for this?
 - (3) How much of the costs were offset by the incentive payments?
 - g. About how long did it take to implement the provision? What was involved in implementation?
 - (1) [For states that set an implementation date in the future:] Did the state plan to delay implementation of the provision for [x] months following enactment of the legislation? Why?
 - (2) Did implementation take more or less time than anticipated? Why? What factors led to the faster or slower implementation?

- h. What is the likelihood that your state will repeal this provision? Why? [*Probes: Staff or financial burden too high; not efficient use of funds; political sentiment; other.*] Has there been discussion about this already? If so, who is leading this effort and what are the key reasons for doing so?
3. Provision 2: [for those states that did not already have an ARRA-specified Provision 2]
- a. What changes to IT and data systems had to be made in order to implement the provision? Why? How long did that take?
 - b. Did staff have to be retrained? If so, which staff and how was the training accomplished? How long did it take?
 - c. How was information distributed to claimants who were newly eligible or eligible for higher weekly benefits under [Provision 2]? How effective was the distribution of information in reaching affected claimants? Why?
 - d. What was the effect on claims processing?
 - (1) How was the flow and processing of initial claims affected? How many additional claimants became eligible as a result of adopting [provision 2]?
 - (2) How was this different from what had been predicted? Why?
 - (3) Was there an increase in the rate of denial of benefits or was it more or less the same?
 - e. What was the effect on the total amount of benefit dollars paid out?
 - (1) How was this different from what had been predicted? Why?
 - f. Your state's responses on the UI administrator survey indicated that the estimated costs were [insert response] and that factors [insert factors] went into that calculation.
 - (1) What were the key cost factors associated with the implementation of [Provision 2]? [*Probes: Costs for IT upgrades, staff retraining, administrative costs, additional benefits paid out for those eligible under the provision.*]
 - (2) How did actual costs compare with estimated or predicted costs? If there was a discrepancy between the two, what accounts for this?
 - (3) How much of the costs were offset by the incentive payments?
 - g. About how long did it take to implement the provision? What was involved in implementation?
 - (1) [For states that set an implementation date in the future:] Why did the state plan to delay implementation of the provision for [x] months following enactment of the legislation? Why?
 - (2) Did implementation take more or less time than anticipated? Why? What factors led to the faster or slower implementation?
 - h. What is the likelihood that your state will repeal this provision? Why? [*Probes: Staff or financial burden too high; not efficient use of funds; political sentiment; other.*] Has there been discussion about this already? If so, who is leading this effort and what are the key reasons for doing so?
4. Assessment
- a. In the end, to what extent had the state foreseen the various implementation issues surrounding the modernization provisions adopted, and how prepared were administrators and staff?
 - (1) What issues were unexpected?
 - (2) How were they resolved?

- b. To what extent did the modernization provisions adopted effectively reach the target populations and expand eligibility (as appropriate)?
- c. What were the key challenges to adopting the modernization provisions? Did certain provisions have specific challenges? If so, please describe.
- d. In general, what is the state's assessment on whether the benefits of adopting the provisions outweighed the challenges/costs?
 - (1) What were the key benefits? [*Probe: Additional UI benefits, more workers eligible, fairer system.*]
 - (2) What were the key challenges? [*Probes: Strain on staff, processing paperwork, IT changes.*]
 - (3) How did the state/staff overcome any challenges?

MODULE 4: FEDERAL ADDITIONAL COMPENSATION (FAC)

A. General Implementation Issues

1. How long did it take the state to provide the additional compensation to UI recipients after the FAC was established through legislation? What factors influenced timing of implementation?
2. What were the implementation and administrative issues encountered? Which issues were expected and which were unexpected?
 - a. What changes, if any, had to be made to IT systems?
 - b. Did staff have to be retrained? If so, which staff, on what, and how was that accomplished?
 - c. How was information on the FAC distributed to claimants?
 - d. How was the flow and processing of claims affected?
3. How was implementation of the FAC affected by the different types of benefits (regular UI, EUC08 tiers, EB) being paid out to claimants? What differences, if any, were there by benefit type?

B. Program-Specific Questions

1. Did the state withhold taxes from FAC payments if the claimant requested it? If so, how was that accomplished from a technical standpoint?
2. Were there issues of overpayments as a result of FAC? How widespread was this and how was that money recouped?
3. We understand that your state requested \$[insert amount] from USDOL for implementation of the FAC. What cost assumptions factors went into that budget estimate? In the end, were implementation costs above or below your estimated budget? Please explain. Did your state use all these funds? Why or why not?
4. What were the major challenges in implementing the FAC? *[Probe: Monitor/increase in fraud, timing of implementation, IT changes and so on.]*

MODULE 5: RECEIPT OF FIRST \$2,400 IN BENEFITS FREE OF FEDERAL INCOME TAXATION

A. General Background

1. Before ARRA, how did the state notify claimants of the option of having income tax withheld from their payments? *[Probe for customers being notified: during initial phone or internet claim filing; other written materials.]*
2. What percentage of claimants typically opted to have income tax withheld before ARRA?
3. How did this change for year 2009?

B. Implementation Issues

1. What changes, if any, had to be made to IT systems to accommodate this policy? To set it up? To end it?
2. What existing materials had to be modified to explain this policy? *[Probe: Paper materials, internet sites, mailings.]*
3. How were new claimants notified of the provision that the first \$2,400 of unemployment benefits received in 2009 were tax free? How were existing claimants informed? How did notification methods change as a result of this policy?
4. To what extent did staff have to be trained on this policy? Which staff? On what? How was this accomplished?
5. How did the state deal with any money that had already been withheld from claimants' benefits? Was it refunded to claimants? How?
6. Was there an increase in fraud? If so, why and how widespread was the problem?
7. Were there any other reporting or technical challenges encountered by enacting this policy? Please describe.

MODULE 6: TEMPORARY SUSPENSION OF INTEREST PAYMENTS ON ALL STATE TRUST FUND ADVANCES

A. State Trust Fund Advances

1. Did the state have any interest payments due on previous advances during the period starting February 17, 2009, and ending on December 31, 2010? If so, when were these advances taken? How much interest was suspended on these advances during this period? [*Probe: How much money did the state save by not having to pay this interest over the time period?*]
2. Did the state apply for a trust fund advance(s) from February 17, 2009 to December 31, 2010? If so, when was the application(s) made?
3. What loan balance was outstanding as of January 1, 2011 (i.e., the expiration of the interest free period)? How much was principal and how much was interest?

B. State Unemployment Trust Fund (UTF) Activity

1. If an application for a trust fund advance was made, what were the key reasons the state applied for it? What influenced the timing of the application(s)?
2. If the state did not apply for a trust fund advance during this period, why not?
3. How did the suspension of interest on advances taken during this period affect the state's repayment of trust fund advances?
 - a. Did the state delay repaying loans during the interest-free period? Please provide details.
 - (1) If so, was it because of the temporary elimination of interest payments? Was it because the state was unable to repay the advance? Were there other reasons?
4. Did the interest provision result in the state delaying making amendments to its laws to qualify for modernization incentive payments? [*Probes: Did it discourage the state from adopting modernization provisions because, at least in the short term, the state had available the money it would otherwise have had to use for interest payments, and did not therefore need the modernization incentive funds?*]
5. What effect did the interest provision have on any actions the state considered taking to keep the UTF solvent? [*Probes for actions that could have been considered: hiking taxes, reducing benefit amounts, enacting modernization provisions.*]
6. Were there any administrative/accounting/IT issues encountered by the suspension of interest payments? Please explain.

MODULE 7: CONCLUDING QUESTIONS

- A. In what ways do you feel that the ARRA provisions will affect your state's UC program following the recession? [*Probes: TUR trigger for EB, modernization provisions (including ABP), FAC, interest-free loans.*]
1. To what extent do you think the state will retain any or all of the newly adopted modernization provisions? Why?
 2. To what extent will the state revert to its previous provisions? Why?
- B. In your estimation, have the benefits of the various ARRA provisions outweighed the costs? Please explain.
- C. What was the overall impact of the ARRA provisions on the state's UC staff? Overall how did the provisions affect call-center staff? Reemployment assessment staff? Administrative and state office staff?
- D. Overall, what is your estimation of the effects that the ARRA provisions had on your IT systems? Were there ways that any particular strains or challenges could have been averted? Please describe.
- E. Overall, what have been the implications of the ARRA provisions on the state's performance measures? Please describe. To what extent has the state had to focus on particular measures at the expense of others? Again, please explain.
- F. Were there any other challenges or issues that you believe could have been lessened or averted by different federal or state policies? Please explain.
- G. Are there particular provisions you would have preferred not to have been included in ARRA? Which ones and why? Are there others you would have preferred? Which ones and why?
- H. Overall, do you believe the ARRA provisions benefited the state? Why or why not?

