# Unemployment Insurance (UI) Benefit Operations Self-Assessment Tool:
## *Data Validation (DV)*

This self-assessment review of the state's Data Validation (DV) functional area will examine Data Validation processes as well as program performance.  The reviewer will consult with appropriate staff regarding each operational element, as necessary, to ensure accurate and complete information is reported.  This will include Unemployment Insurance (UI) administrators, IT managers, fiscal officers, office/call center managers, supervisors, coordinators, or staff.

Upon completion of this review, the results should be shared with UI administrators, appropriate program manager(s), and supervisors.  The self-assessment findings can provide a very good analysis of the state's Data Validation operations and can be used to drive process and program-improvement initiatives.

A comments section is provided for each operational element, which the reviewer should use to document any observations regarding issues identified related to that specific operational element.  This space may also be used to provide any additional information relating to a specific question in this section.  In doing so, the reviewer should reference the specific question by number and insert the additional information related to that question.

In addition, a concluding comments section is provided at the end of the self-assessment instrument to capture any strengths identified by the reviewer in this functional area which could constitute a successful practice(s) to be shared with other states; any issues identified by the reviewer in the functional area that adversely impacts the state's performance and to identify any possible corrective actions to address the issue; and general comments about this functional area. The reviewer can provide information here that Federal reviewers and state UI administrators and managers can use to assess program operations and the state's effectiveness in conducting the activities of this functional area.

*Save your entries regularly as you complete the review and when you close the self-assessment to ensure your answers are saved.*

**Procedures, Policies and Confidentiality**

The purpose of this section is to review the policies and procedures provided by the agency for staff to use in operating this functional area of the UI program.  These are the written (in hard-copy, electronically, or both formats) standards, instructions, and guidelines that staff regularly use in the operation of the program.  The reviewer may utilize resources that include manuals, handbooks, desk aids, computer help screens, training guides, organized collections of procedures or policies, or other readily accessible instructions which can help staff do their work correctly, including ETA Handbook No. 361 and ETA Handbook No. 412 for guidance regarding Data Validation.  Instructions will normally include general information such as compilations of relevant laws and regulations, as well as detailed instructions for carrying out individual jobs in the agency.  The reviewer may need to examine all relevant instructions and consult with UI administrators, IT managers, office/call center managers, supervisors, and the state's coordinators.

The reviewer will document whether the state has policies and procedures sufficient to provide guidance and instruction to staff that conduct Data Validation processes.  Existing policies and procedures should be examined to determine whether they are up-to-date and address all law changes, organizational changes and technology changes that occurred during the review period.

**Helpful Info.**

*Question 4a:*  The reviewer will explain why policies and procedures are not in place to ensure correct definitions are being used during the validation process for elimination of systematic and random errors.

*Question 6:*  The reviewer may use the Comments area at the end of this Section to provide responses to this question, if space is not adequate to fully respond.

*Question 7:*  The reviewer will assess and explain the policies and procedures that are in place to conduct Wage Item Validation (WIV) regarding wage records submitted on employer wage and contribution reports (Module 5*).  (If space is not adequate to fully respond to this question, the reviewer may use space in the Comments area at the end of this section.)*

## SECTION 2:  Training

Managers/employees should possess and maintain a level of expertise which enables them to accomplish their assigned duties.  Training systems should be sufficient to ensure that personnel understand and perform their duties properly.  When reviewing training systems, the reviewer should consult with the state's training unit/staff and the Data Validation manager, and examine formal training procedures (e.g., the training is conducted using an established schedule and using set guidelines to make judgments about the quality of work being produced).  The state should have procedures for identifying general and specific training needs, for developing a training curriculum and training materials, and for delivering training as needs are identified.

> **Helpful Info.**
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> *Question 3:*  The reviewer should document any technology or operational changes that have been implemented during the review period that affect DV processes.
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> *Question 5:*  The reviewer should assess how training topics are determined and select all methods used to determine training topics.

## SECTION 3:  Workload Analysis/Management Controls

The reviewer will examine state's ability to manage Data Validation workloads, particularly when unforeseen changes in resources occur, and will also review the methods used by the state to manage workload or delay issues, when they occur, to ensure the state's ability to conduct Data Validation.  The reviewer will document process-improvement initiatives aimed at improving DV operations.  The reviewer will interview the Data Validation manager, supervisors, and performance management staff to thoroughly document the state's practices for managing its DV workload.

> **Helpful Info.**
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> *Question 2a:* The reviewer should document the methods the state uses to review the quality and timeliness of completed DV operations.
>
> *Question 3:*  The reviewer should document any procedures the state has to manage DV workload issues.
>
> *Question 4a:*  The reviewer will document the reason(s) the state experienced delays in its DV operations, if any, during the review period.

**Helpful Info. (*continued*)**

*Question 5a:*  Describe all business process analysis initiatives the state conducted during the review period regarding its DV processes to increase efficiency and what operational changes have been implemented as a result of those initiatives.

## SECTION 4:  Performance Management

The reviewer will examine the state's practices for monitoring program performance and compliance with Federal and state law and regulations.  Review the state's practices for the preparation and monitoring of corrective action plans to ensure timely and accurate submittal and methods for continued monitoring of program performance in relation to designated milestones.  If the state has a performance management unit, the reviewer should consult with performance management staff in addition to UI administrators, office/call center managers, and Data Validation supervisors when completing this section.

**Helpful Info.**

*Question 1:*  The reviewer should consult with UI managers for information regarding any Corrective Action Plan(s) or Narrative that the state's State Quality Service Plan (SQSP) contained during the review period concerning its DV performance.

*Question 2a:*  The reviewer will document the methods the state uses to monitor its DV operations.  If the state's processes for monitoring its DV performance are considered to be particularly effective and/or efficient, explain fully in the Comments area at the end of this section.

## SECTION 5:  Information Technology (IT)

When completing this section of the self-assessment, the reviewer should consult with UI and IT administrators and the Data Validation manager.  IT projects relating to UI Data Validation that were completed during the review period and unmet IT needs will be detailed.  The reviewer will assess the IT department's delivery of programming and technical support to the Data Validation functional areas.

**Helpful Info.**

*Question 1a:* The reviewer should describe any major IT projects that were conducted during the review period and provide information regarding the project status, and if completed, the success of the project.

*Questions 2:* While Question 1 focuses on major IT projects affecting DV operations, Question 2 concerns any technical upgrades or releases affecting DV operations.

*Question 7a:* If the state had IT needs related to its DV program that were not met, the reviewer should document the needs that were not met and the impact it had on the DV program, if any.

*Questions 3a, 5a, 6a and 7a:* The reviewer may use the Comments area at the end of this section, if space is not adequate to fully respond to these questions.

## SECTION 6:  Staffing

The reviewer will examine organizational changes that occurred during the review period, if any, and their effect on the state's ability to manage its Data Validation operations and to meet quality standards for Data Validation.  The reviewer should consult with UI administrators, the Data Validation managers and the state agency's human resource manager when completing this section of the self-assessment.

**Helpful Info.**

*Question 1a:* If staff that conduct Data Validation have other program responsibilities as well, the reviewer should document the other responsibilities and the amount of time spent on those responsibilities.  *(If space is not adequate to fully respond to this question, the reviewer may use space in the Comments area at the end of this Section.)*

*Question 3:* The reviewer will report the number of FTEs budgeted for data validation; that is, the positions budgeted by the state after Federal "base" allocations.

*Question 3a:* The number of FTEs dedicated to data validation impact the state's ability to meet Federal requirements.  Dedicated FTEs means the number of FTEs that were charged to the function.

*Question 5a:* The reviewer should explain the impact of any reorganization on Data Validation operations.

## SECTION 7:  Concluding Summary Comments

The reviewer will use the Concluding Summary Comments section to highlight the state's strengths and weaknesses that impact the Data Validation functional area and identify issues that have not been addressed in any other section of the self-assessment.  These comments are intended to provide Federal reviewers and the state's UI administrators with additional insight into these program areas, focusing on methods that have proven to be successful and can be capitalized upon or areas where corrective measures may be needed.

The first comment area provides the reviewer an opportunity to share any examples of good and/or exemplary operations in this functional area after reviewing each operational element. The reviewer can use this space to identify any policy, procedure or operation that would constitute a successful practice that can be shared with other states.

The second comment area provides the reviewer to document issues detected during the review that are having an adverse impact on the functional area, affecting the state's performance, ability to meet performance standards or customer service.  It is also a place to recommend corrective actions for the agency's leadership to consider implementing.

The final comment area in this section provides the reviewer space to share any additional comments, concerns or observations regarding the state's operations in this functional area.