○ **UI** ○

Unemployment Insurance (UI) Benefit Operations Self-Assessment Tool:
Overarching Operational Matters

REVIEW PERIOD: **Begins**   **Ends**

Unless otherwise noted, all questions are applicable to the review period.

SECTION 1: Procedures, Policies, and Confidentiality

Resources may include manuals, handbooks, desk aids, computer help screens, training guides, organized collections of procedures or policies, or other readily accessible instructions that can help staff do their work correctly. 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. Reviewers may need to look in many places to examine all relevant instructions.

1.   Does the state have systemic procedures and set frequencies for reviewing and updating the benefits operating manuals used by agency staff?

2.   Does the state have procedures to ensure its Administrative Regulations pertaining to unemployment insurance (UI) are updated, as needed, as the result of statutory changes?

   2a. If yes, were the Administrative Regulations updated during the review period?

   2b. If yes, what changes were made?

3. Does the state have policies and procedures regarding the retention of UI records, including electronic, hard-copy, and microfilm/microfiche, in accordance with the state records retention regulations and consistent with Federal regulation 29 CFR 97.42?

4. Does the state have policies and procedures regarding confidentiality of UI records that are consistent with Federal regulation 20 CFR § 603 et seq.?

5. Does the state have a written policy to ensure that staff who work remotely handle personally identifiable information in accordance with confidentiality requirements?

5a. During the review period were there any incidents of confidentiality breaches by staff that work remotely?

6. Does the state have policies and procedures to address instances where confidential information is provided to or obtained by an unauthorized party?

6a. If yes, what steps does the state take?

6b. Do procedures vary depending upon type and magnitude of the breach?

7.   If the state provides services in a group setting (e.g., taking initial and continued claims, eligibility reviews, etc.), what steps are taken to ensure each individual's confidential information is protected?

7a. How is each individual's identity verified?

8.   Does the state utilize a UI Advisory Council to review and recommend UI legislation, agency policies, etc.?

SECTION 1: Comments

Document any issues that were identified when completing this section. This comment section may also be used to provide additional information relating to any specific question(s) in this section.

SECTION 2: Training

Managers/employees should possess and maintain a level of expertise that 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, reviewers must look for 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). There should be procedures for identifying general and specific training needs, and for delivering training as needed.

1. Does the state have a dedicated training unit that provides training on agency policies, state and Federal regulations, and confidentiality?

   1a. How is training for these topics delivered to staff? (*check all that apply*)
      Self-guided online training
      One-on-one training
      Classroom setting
      Bulletins or circulars
      Other (*explain*)

2. Does the state have procedures in place throughout its UI units to promote cross-training of staff for efficiency and succession planning?

   2a. If yes, how is this training conducted? (*check all that apply*)
      Self-guided online training
      Classroom setting
      One-on-one training

   Question 2a check boxes continue on next page

U.S. Department of Labor's online training
Other (*explain*)

3. Does the state have a training curriculum for the following topics? (*check all that apply*)
    Data security
    Confidentiality requirements
    Equal Employment Opportunity requirements
    Records retention requirements

4. How are UI agency employees (state employees and/or contractors) trained on the proper handling and safeguarding of confidential UI claim information and the penalties for unauthorized use of confidential claim information?

SECTION 2: Comments

Document any issues that were identified when completing this section. This comment section may also be used to provide additional information relating to any specific question(s) in this section.

SECTION 3: Workload Analysis / Management Controls

The state's ability to manage UI programs, particularly through periods of high unemployment and the associated spike in workloads, is analyzed. Reviewers will address process-improvement initiatives aimed at minimizing backlogs.

1.   Does the state have a strategic plan that includes steps to be taken to mitigate spikes in UI workloads?

   1a. If yes, what are the key elements of the workload management plan?

2.   What methods, if any, does the state use to identify process improvements or business process analysis initiatives (e.g., cross-program brainstorming meetings, employee suggestion program, etc.)?

SECTION 3: Comments

Document any issues that were identified when completing this section. This comment section may also be used to provide additional information relating to any specific question(s) in this section.

SECTION 4: Performance Management

The state's practices for monitoring program performance and compliance with Federal and state law and regulations are examined. Preparation and monitoring of corrective action plans are necessary functions to further program performance improvements.

1. During the review period, did the state use Benefits Accuracy Measurements (BAM) performance data or BAM results to successfully identify and prioritize training needs, IT projects, business process improvement projects, budget expenditures, or supplemental funding requests?

2. What unit or office is responsible for monitoring program performance for all UI operations to ensure performance standards are met and corrective action plans are fulfilled?

3. Indicate the line of authority for the BAM program manager.
    Part of the UI operation structure (reporting to the UI Director)
    Independent division or unit separate from UI operations
    Other organizational structure (*explain*)

4. Indicate the line of authority for the individual(s) conducting this self-assessment.

Part of the UI operation structure (reporting to the UI Director)

Independent division or unit separate from UI operations

Other organizational structure (*explain*)

5. Were there any organizational changes during the review period that affected the state's BAM operations?

5a. If yes, what organizational changes did the state implement, when were these changes implemented, and what was the effect on the state's BAM operations?

SECTION 4: Comments

Document any issues that were identified when completing this section. This comment section may also be used to provide additional information relating to any specific question(s) in this section.

SECTION 5: Information Technology (IT)

The state's IT operations, including projects completed during the review period and planned for the future, are examined. The reviewer will assess the IT department's delivery of programming and technical support to the UI programs. Having a disaster recovery plan as well as contingency planning to implement emergency procedures with a short lead time is vital to continued operations under extreme conditions.

1. During the review period, did the state have a work group or committee composed of appropriate UI staff to review and prioritize IT projects and work requests?

> **1a.** If not, how did the state prioritize its IT projects?

2. Is the state conducting any UI-IT modernization efforts?

> **2a.** If yes, what is the status of the UI IT modernization initiative?

Benefits:
> Planned
> In Progress
> Completed   Date completed:
> N/A

Tax:
> Planned
> In Progress
> Completed   Date completed:
> N/A

Question 2a check boxes continue on next page

Appeals:
Planned
In Progress
Completed   Date completed:
N/A

Benefit Payment Control:
Planned
In Progress
Completed   Date completed:
N/A

2b. If yes, how is the state undertaking its modernization effort? *(check all that apply)*
In-house using agency staff only
Vendor/agency effort
Multi-state consortium
Other (*explain*)

N/A

3. If the state is using legacy systems, how old is each UI program system (in years)?

Benefits: years

Tax: years

Appeals: years

Benefit Payment Control: years

4.   On what type of computer system do the UI program applications run?

Agency operated system

Centralized statewide system

Other (*explain*)

4a. If UI applications are not on an agency operated system, describe how this affects development time for implementing UI program changes and response time when outages occur?

5.   Are there any IT projects planned for the future, either for mandated changes or performance improvements for the UI Benefits, Appeals, or Tax systems?

5a. If yes, what are the projects and what is the expected start date and duration for each?

6.   During the review period, did the state have adequate technical staff to support PC workstations, servers, telephony, and network infrastructure?

7. During the review period, did the state have a standing team/committee responsible for developing and maintaining a disaster recovery plan?

8. Does the state have a disaster recovery site available?
　　　State-owned
　　　Vendor owned
　　　Other (*explain*)

　　　N/A

9. Does the state review and/or update and test its IT Contingency Plan annually?

　　9a. When was the Contingency Plan last updated?

　　9b. When was the Contingency Plan last tested and what were the results?

10. Does the state review and/or update its System Security Plan annually?

　　10a. When was the System Security Plan last updated?

11. Does the state conduct an IT Risk Assessment at least once every three years?

　　11a. When was the last Risk Assessment conducted?

12. During the review period, did the state conduct a threat assessment technical review of its Internet-based applications?

    12a. If yes, what was the date of the last review, what type of threat assessment did the state perform, and what was the result?

    12b. If any deficiencies were identified in the threat assessment, have they been corrected at the time of this review?

    12c. If not, explain why the deficiences have not been corrected and when they are expected to be resolved.

13. Does the state use a formal Project Management process for IT systems projects and program implementations?

14. Does the state have a structured Change Management process to govern how IT projects are prioritized, managed, and implemented?

15. During the review period, was the state required to submit a Corrective Action Plan for failure to have complete, up-to-date security documentation or for not having tested its plans? (*check all that apply*)

    IT Contingency Plan
    System Security Plan
    Risk Assessment documents
    N/A

SECTION 5: Comments

Document any issues that were identified when completing this section. This comment section may also be used to provide additional information relating to any specific question(s) in this section.

SECTION 6: Access and Communications

States need to maintain compliance with requirements set forth in Federal law regarding program accessibility and maintaining a system(s) that is available to all claimants and employers. Claims-filing systems should be user-friendly, customer-facing systems and integrated operating systems to provide the best customer experience and efficient operations.

1. Do the systems used by the state meet accessibility standards in accordance with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act (29 U.S.C. 794d), UIPL No. 30-11, UIPL No. 02-16 and the state's accessibility guidance or standards, if different?

   Internet:

   Telephone:

   In-person:

   Mail:

   Other (*explain*):

   1a. If yes, what testing procedure(s) does the state use to ensure the fact-finding systems are in compliance?

2. Does the state offer different language options for communicating with claimants and employers in accordance with UIPL No. 30 - 11 and UIPL No. 02-16 for each of the following filing methods, if applicable?

Internet:

Telephone:

In-person:

Mail:

Other (*explain*):

2a. Are the language options noted in Question 2 offered in the following functional areas:

Initial Claims Intake:

Appeals:

Adjudications:

Benefit Payment Control (BPC):

Eligibility Reviews:

Reemployment Services:

Continued Claims:

Question 2a continues on next page

Short-Time Compensation (STC):

Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA):

Trade Readjustment Allowances (TRA):

Other (*explain*):

2b. For each contact method used, are the alternative languages based upon the significant population(s) of residents that have a specific primary language that is other than English?

Internet:

Telephone:

In-person:

Mail:

Other (*explain*):

2c. For each communication method used, indicate below the most common language options available and describe the method used to create translations.

Internet:
  Language
  1.   Contractor   In-house   Other:
  2.   Contractor   In-house   Other:
  3.   Contractor   In-house   Other:
  4.   Contractor   In-house   Other:
  5.   Contractor   In-house   Other:
  6.   Contractor   In-house   Other:

Telephone:
  Language
  1.   Contractor   In-house   Other:
  2.   Contractor   In-house   Other:
  3.   Contractor   In-house   Other:
  4.   Contractor   In-house   Other:
  5.   Contractor   In-house   Other:
  6.   Contractor   In-house   Other:

In-person:
  Language
  1.   Contractor   In-house   Other:
  2.   Contractor   In-house   Other:
  3.   Contractor   In-house   Other:
  4.   Contractor   In-house   Other:
  5.   Contractor   In-house   Other:
  6.   Contractor   In-house   Other:

2d. If individuals speak languages other than those languages listed in 2c above, what other resources/ services, if any, would the agency use to provide assistance via the following methods, if applicable (e.g., assistance from community-based cultural organizations)?

Internet:

Telephone:

In-person:

Mail:

Other:

3. Does the state employ bilingual staff to assist claimants and employers?

3a. If yes, indicate language(s) spoken.

3b. If yes, indicate the methods used by bilingual staff to assist claimants and employers.
Internet (e.g., claimants can initiate online chat session with a staff person)
Telephone
In-person
Other (*explain*)

4. If multiple language options are available, describe how claimants and employers access their chosen language when using the following methods.

Internet:

Telephone:

In-person:

Mail:

Other:

5. Indicate the type of resources the state uses to assist hearing impaired individuals using the following methods, if applicable in the state.

Telephone   TTY

In-person   Sign language services

Internet (*explain*):

Other (*explain*):

N/A

6. Indicate the state's primary access points/communication methods for UI claimants.

Internet (e.g., claimants can initiate online chat session with a staff person)

Telephone

In-person

Mail

Other (*explain*)

7. What alternative program access points/communication methods does the state provide for individuals with access barriers; including, but not limited to individuals with disabilities, individuals with limited English proficiency (LEP), individuals who are not computer literate or may not have access to computers, and individuals who are illiterate in their primary language?

8. What processes does the state have to communicate to individuals with access barriers about alternative access points?

9. For languages spoken by a significant number or proportion of individuals who may be eligible for UI benefits, are there processes in place to ensure these individuals are able to learn about, apply for, and maintain eligibility in the relevant languages for every program delivery avenue (e.g., online, in person, and/or by phone)?

10. Are vital documents and/or information necessary for an LEP individual to learn about, apply for, and maintain eligibility available in both hard copy and electronic text on a website?

11. What interpretation services does the state provide for LEP individuals?

12. Is the state compliant with the provisions of Section 188 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) (P.L. 113-128) and relevant regulations implementing WIOA related to Section 188?

13. Are state staff fully trained on alternative access provisions and services available to LEP individuals, so that staff knows how to connect UC claimants with alternative access points to ensure their full access to program services and benefits, if eligible?

SECTION 6: Comments

Document any issues that were identified when completing this section. This comment section may also be used to provide additional information relating to any specific question(s) in this section.

SECTION 7: Operational Efficiency / Resource Allocation

Are sufficient resources available--training, facilities, staff, etc., to support program operations? What efficiencies and automation has the state employed to improve performance and provide better services to its customers? Are there areas for improvement that will be addressed in the future?

1. During the review period, did the state conduct any initiatives regarding its facilities to improve program efficiency (e.g., consolidation of locations, renovations, etc.)?

   1a. If yes, explain.

2. During the review period, did the state conduct any initiatives to change its service delivery methods to improve program efficiency (e.g., change/extend office hours, four-day work week for staff, etc.)?

   2a. If yes, explain.

3. Does the state utilize a documents management system?

3a. If yes, what type of system does the state use?

3b. Are there aspects of the system that the state would like to automate or update with newer technology? (*explain*)

4. Does the state use an imaging system?

4a. If yes, does the imaging system utilize bar coding?

SECTION 7: Comments

Document any issues that were identified when completing this section. This comment section may also be used to provide additional information relating to any specific question(s) in this section.

SECTION 8: Staffing / Merit Staffing

Staffing levels, retirements and organizational changes all can affect the state's ability to manage its UI operations. The use of merit and non-merit staff is also reviewed in this section.

1. During the review period, approximately what percentages of the state's UI workforce comprised the following categories?

Regular, classified employees: %

Unclassified employees: %

Contract employees: %

Emergency or temporary employees: %

Other (*explain*):

2. Does the state employ any non-merit staff in the following UI program operations?

Initial Claims Intake:

If yes, what positions do they hold and what are their responsibilities?

Appeals:

    If yes, what positions do they hold and what are their responsibilities?

Adjudications:

    If yes, what positions do they hold and what are their responsibilities?

Eligibility Reviews:

    If yes, what positions do they hold and what are their responsibilities?

Reemployment Services:

If yes, what positions do they hold and what are their responsibilities?

Continued Claims:

If yes, what positions do they hold and what are their responsibilities?

Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA):

If yes, what positions do they hold and what are their responsibilities?

Question 2 continues on next page

Trade Readjustment Allowances (TRA):

    If yes, what positions do they hold and what are their responsibilities?

Benefit Payment Control (BPC):

    If yes, what positions do they hold and what are their responsibilities?

Short-Time Compensation (STC):

    If yes, what positions do they hold and what are their responsibilities?

UCFE Claims Intake and Processing:

      If yes, what positions do they hold and what are their responsibilities?

UCX Claims Intake and Processing:

      If yes, what positions do they hold and what are their responsibilities?

Other (*explain*):

      If yes, what positions do they hold and what are their responsibilities?

3. Does the state ensure that only merit staff has decision making authority?

3a. If no, explain.

4. Was overtime required to meet workload requirements during the review period?

4a. If yes, provide the program areas and timeframes for which overtime was required.

4b. What were the most common reasons for overtime? (*check all that apply*)
Increased workloads
Staff shortage
Inefficient processes
Other (*explain*)

5. Does the state reduce staff hours during slow workload periods?

6. Does the state utilize part-time or intermittent staff for flexibility in scheduling work hours based upon workload?

   6a. Are part-time or intermittent staff used to perform inherently governmental functions?

   6b. If yes, are such staff selected following merit staffing requirements?

   6c. If the state uses means other than part-time or intermittent staff to manage staff hours in accordance with workload fluctuations, explain what methods are used.

7. Does the state have a contingency plan to handle workload fluctuations (i.e. identify staff with claims taking experience)?

   7a. If yes, explain.

8. Has the state had a loss of management staff from the unemployment insurance program during the review period?

8a. If yes, what management staff positions were vacated during the review period?

8b. What effect did the departure(s) have on the UI operations?

9. During the review period, did the UI units provide subject matter experts to assist on IT modernization or other IT projects?

9a. If yes, approximately how many staff hours or FTEs were devoted to work on IT projects?

10. Does the state have an up-to-date organizational chart accurately depicting positions supporting UI benefits operations?

11. Does the state have formal procedures for formulating a layoff plan, when necessary?

11a. If yes, explain.

12. Does the state have a succession plan developed for the following work units? (*check all that apply*)

Benefits:
> Plan Developed
> Last Updated:

Appeals:
> Plan Developed
> Last Updated:

BPC:
> Plan Developed
> Last Updated:

BAM:
> Plan Developed
> Last Updated:

Data Validation:
> Plan Developed
> Last Updated:

Tax:
> Plan Developed
> Last Updated:

Fiscal:
> Plan Developed
> Last Updated:

SECTION 8: Comments

Document any issues that were identified when completing this section. This comment section may also be used to provide additional information relating to any specific question(s) in this section.

SECTION 9: Fiscal Management

The state's practices for managing its grants and its compliance with Federal and state laws and regulations in regards to its fiscal management policies are examined.

1. How does the organization ensure that a grant is not charged unallowable costs based on applicable cost principles and the provisions of the grant agreement?

2. Are UI management involved in the program's budget preparation and planning processes?

3. Does the state monitor that benefits are paid from the correct accounts (e.g., UCX, UCFE, TRA, etc.) so that the payments can be tracked and reported separately?

3a. If yes, how is this monitored? (*check all that apply*)
   Automated   Manual

3b. What unit or office is responsible for monitoring that payments are being paid from correct accounts?

4. During the review period, did the state experience any issues in managing accounts for different benefits programs (e.g., UCFE, UCX, etc.)?

4a. If yes, explain.

5. What unit/division is responsible for monitoring the obligation and expenditure of Supplemental Budget Request (SBR) funds to ensure expenditures are appropriate and within grant timelines?

6. In cases where the state has multiple (SBR) grants, what safeguards does the state have in place to ensure that each grant is used only for the project for which the funds are intended?

7. During the review period, did the state experience any issues in the obligation and expenditure of the state's grant funds?

7a. If yes, explain.

8. During the review period, did the state experience any issues in enforcing the separation of duties so that one person is not responsible for more than one of the following functions?

Record – a separate person should record the transaction:

Authorization – a separate person should authorize the transaction:

Custodian – a separate person should hold or have custody of the asset:

Execute – a separate person should perform the activity (e.g., request of cash is separate from the bank or state treasury reconciliation process):

9. Are staffing and budget reports available to UI managers for use in managing staffing?

9a. If yes, how often are these reports prepared and distributed?
Real-time   Weekly   Monthly   Quarterly
Other (*explain*)

10. During the review period, what unit/division was responsible for completion and submission of the ETA 9130 Financial Report?

11. During the review period, what unit or office was responsible for preparing the state's Resource Justification Model (RJM) reports?

    11a. If UI staff does not prepare the RJM, what level of input do they have toward its content?

12. During the review period, did the UI division dispose of agency-owned property?

    12a. If yes, were the proceeds from the sale properly reported and expended on additional program services?

13. Is the state a member of an IT consortium?

13a. If so, does the state have a complete and current Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in place, signed by all consortium members, which covers the cost guidelines and policies of the agency that awarded the grant?

13b. Does the state have policies and procedures in place to monitor grants to consortium member sub-recipients?

14. During the review period, did the state experience any issues concerning its ability to accurately track staff time used for any of the UI functions listed in Question 14a to determine FTE usage?

14a. If yes, indicate the UI functions for which tracking staff time was an issue. (*check all that apply*)
Initial Claims
Weeks Claimed (Includes ERP)
Nonmonetary Determinations
Multi-claimant Services
Appeals
UI PERFORMS
Administrative Staff & Technical Services (AS&T)
UI Support/AS&T
Benefits/Appeals Travel
Benefit Payment Control
Internal Security
Interstate Activities
TAA Benefits & Administration
DUA Benefits & Administration
Tax

14b. How does the state track staff time?
Automated   Manual

15. Do the state's cash management policies and procedures regarding administrative grant funds include guidelines regarding the timing of the drawdown of funds in relation to the actual disbursement of those funds?

16. What checks and balances does the agency have in place to ensure administrative grant funds are deposited and transferred in accordance with state and Federal regulations?

17. During the review period, did the state meet all fiscal reporting requirements, including timely submission of ETA's required fiscal reports?

SECTION 9: Comments

Document any issues that were identified when completing this section. This comment section may also be used to provide additional information relating to any specific question(s) in this section.

SECTION 10: Concluding Summary Comments for Overarching Operational Matters

Considering all the areas examined in Overarching Operational Matters, provide any appropriate responses to the following narrative questions. Additional space for comments and reviewer notes is available on pages 53 and 54.

1. Provide any observations of good and/or exemplary performance in the state's operational policies, procedures, or operations that would constitute successful practices to share with other states.

2. Document any issues detected in the state's operations that adversely affects the state's performance, its ability to meet performance standards/measures, or customer service. Identify any corrective action measures that should be taken to improve the state's performance in regards to any weaknesses identified.

3.   Add any additional comments, concerns, or observations regarding the state's performance or operations in this area that have not been addressed elsewhere and should be noted.

Additional Comments and Reviewer Notes:

Reviewer Information:

REVIEWER

Name:

Title:

Email:

Phone No.:

ADDITIONAL REVIEW TEAM MEMBER

Name:

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