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| <b>EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ADMINISTRATION<br/>ADVISORY SYSTEM<br/>U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR<br/>Washington, D.C. 20210</b> | <b>CLASSIFICATION</b><br>Unemployment Insurance            |
|                                                                                                                           | <b>CORRESPONDENCE SYMBOL</b><br>OUI/Performance Management |
|                                                                                                                           | <b>DATE</b><br>August 17, 2018                             |

**ADVISORY:** UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE PROGRAM LETTER NO. 11-18  
**TO:** STATE WORKFORCE AGENCIES  
**FROM:** ROSEMARY LAHASKY  
 Deputy Assistant Secretary   
**SUBJECT:** ETA 9177 Report - Pre-Implementation Planning Checklist Report for State Unemployment Insurance (UI) Information Technology (IT) Modernization Projects

**1. Purpose.** Building on lessons learned from previous state implementations of modernized UI IT systems, the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration (ETA) facilitated the development of a UI IT Modernization Pre-Implementation Planning Checklist for states to use prior to "going live" with a new UI Benefits and/or Tax system. Prior to the production launch of a UI IT system, State UI agencies must use the ETA 9177 Checklist Report to verify that necessary system functions are available and/or that alternative solutions are developed to help avoid major disruption of services to UI customers and to prevent delays in paying UI benefits when due.

**2. References.**

- Section 303(a)(6), Social Security Act 42 U.S.C. 503(a)(6);
- Section 911(a), Social Security Act 42 U.S.C. 1111(a);
- 5 CFR 1320.5;
- Unemployment Insurance Program Letter (UIPL) No. 26-11, *Unemployment Insurance (UI) Supplemental Funding Opportunity for Program Integrity and Performance and System Improvements*, July 18, 2011;
- UIPL No. 18-12, *Unemployment Insurance (UI) Supplemental Funding Opportunity for Program Integrity, Performance, and System Improvements*, May 11, 2012;
- UIPL No. 24-13, *Unemployment Insurance (UI) Supplemental Funding Opportunity for Program Integrity and Performance and System Improvements*, July 25, 2013;
- UIPL No. 13-14, *Unemployment Insurance (UI) Supplemental Funding Opportunity for Program Integrity and Performance and System Improvements*, June 16, 2014;
- UIPL No. 16-15, *Unemployment Insurance (UI) Supplemental Funding Opportunity for Program Integrity and Performance and System Improvements*, June 15, 2015;
- UIPL No. 19-16, *Unemployment Insurance (UI) Supplemental Funding Opportunity for Improved Operations*, August 2, 2016;
- UIPL No. 22-17, *Unemployment Insurance (UI) Supplemental Funding Opportunity for State Consortia to Modernize Tax and Benefit Systems*, September 8, 2017; and

|                            |                                      |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <b>RESCISSIONS</b><br>None | <b>EXPIRATION DATE</b><br>Continuing |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|

- Training and Employment Notice (TEN) No. 28-14, *Pre-Implementation Planning Checklist for State Unemployment Insurance (UI) Information Technology (IT) Modernization Projects*, March 27, 2015.

3. **Background.** State UI Agencies are heavily dependent on IT systems to carry out their UI program operations and to pay benefits to claimants in a timely manner. UI programs in many states operate using aging IT systems, some dating from the 1970s. As a result, many states are modernizing antiquated UI IT systems. However, recent efforts by states in launching new UI IT systems have resulted in unexpected disruptions of service to customers, delays in the payments of benefits, and the creation of processing backlogs. ETA designed the Pre-Implementation Planning Checklist for State UI IT Modernization Project Report to help avoid future occurrences of similar experiences as an increasing number of states implement new systems.

To help states address this critical program challenge, in Fiscal Year (FY) 2009 ETA began providing funds to state consortia to modernize their UI IT systems as a strategy to reduce costs and accelerate the replacement of outdated UI Benefit and Tax systems. ETA continues to work with states to improve UI program performance and modernize outdated IT infrastructures. Following the initial investment in FY 2009, ETA funded Supplemental Budget Requests (SBRs) for state consortia to modernize their UI Tax and Benefit systems in FY 2011 (UIPL No. 26-11), FY 2012 (UIPL No. 18-12), FY 2013 (UIPL No. 24-13), FY 2014 (UIPL No. 13-14), FY 2015 (UIPL No. 16-15), FY 2016 (UIPL No. 19-16), and FY 2017 (UIPL No. 22-17). Some of these projects are nearing completion and will be launching new systems in the future.

ETA continues to support individual states and state consortia in updating their IT infrastructures, in part, by funding the Information Technology Support Center (ITSC) operated by the National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA). NASWA is a national organization of state administrators of the publicly-funded state workforce system, including the unemployment insurance program. In 2009, NASWA's Center for Employment Security Education and Research (NASWA/CESER) became the operator of the ITSC. ITSC provides information, software tools, products, and advisory services to states in support of IT systems for the UI program, to enhance efficiencies and promote the sharing and replication of successful UI models and practices, as well as supporting states' UI IT modernization efforts. In 2015, ITSC created and ETA announced, via TEN No. 28-14, the availability of a pre-implementation planning checklist to assist state UI agencies in preparing to launch modernized UI IT systems that support administration of UI Benefits and/or Tax operations. This checklist was the impetus for the ETA 9177 Report Checklist.

The ETA 9177 Report Checklist is a comprehensive checklist, which denotes critical functional areas that states must verify prior to launching a new UI IT system including, but not limited to, technical IT functions and UI business processes that interface with the new system. The list of critical areas identified in the checklist is comprised of ten (10) Project Categories:

1. Functionality (Fully Available or Workaround in Place)
2. External Alternate Access Options and Usability Issues Addressed
3. Policies/Procedures Development and Dissemination
4. Technical Preparation
5. Call Center/Customer Service Operations

6. Staffing/Staff Training on New System Operations
7. Staff and Customer Help Desk Support
8. Management Oversight
9. Vendor Support
10. Communications

4. **Reporting.** The information gathered in the ETA 9177 Report Checklist must be used by states to prepare for the implementation of new UI IT systems and ensure the availability of mission critical functions as states prepare to launch a new UI IT system. Any state that is preparing to launch a new UI IT system must certify that it has reviewed and accomplished or has developed an appropriate plan addressing the items detailed in the Pre-Implementation checklist. The collection will also enable ETA to identify any needed technical assistance as states prepare for the implementation of a modernized system.

This information must include a cover page, state general information (state name, date of submission, UI IT Modernization project name [e.g. Consortium name], contact information, and a summary of the project) and the report on each of the UI IT Modernization Pre-Implementation Planning Checklist Project Categories. Each Project Category has associated sub-elements. For every sub-element in the ETA 9177, the state must provide supporting content to demonstrate that it has addressed the specific sub-element. A Certification is required at the end of the report.

For each sub-element, the state must address the issue including but not limited to:

- An overall status report;
- A brief report explaining the status of the project as it relates to the particular sub-element;
- Explanations of any workaround solutions of the processes in the sub-element;
- Explanations if implementation of the new system concerning processes for the sub-element will be delayed;
- Explanations for added clarity and/or to support a narrative;
- Mitigation proposals for addressing any problems;
- New project timelines if applicable; and/or
- Any discussion of identified technical assistance needs for the successful completion of the project.

The new collection is a detailed narrative report, provided by the state, describing pre-implementation preparation of a state's new UI IT system. With this information, ETA will then be able to more effectively and consistently monitor states' progress in implementing the UI IT Modernization projects for which the funds were provided.

Because this report is a narrative and not a statistical submission, states will use an ETA provided simple form template (a Microsoft Word 2010 ".doc") to prepare the ETA 9177 Report Checklist. Once completed, the ETA 9177 Report Checklist must be e-mailed to the appropriate regional office.

5. **Office of Management and Budget Approval.** The Pre-Implementation Planning Checklist Report for State Unemployment Insurance (UI) Information Technology (IT) Modernization Projects has been approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) in accordance

with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995. The OMB Control Number is 1205-0527 with an expiration date of 05/31/2020.

6. **Action Requested.** State Administrators are requested to provide this guidance, including the attached Pre-Implementation Planning Checklist Report and its associated Report Instructions, to appropriate staff, including UI Directors and Chief Information Officers.

7. **Inquiries.** Questions should be directed to the appropriate Regional Office.

8. **Attachment.**

Attachment A: Unemployment Insurance (UI) Information Technology (IT)  
Modernization Pre-Implementation Planning Checklist Report

Attachment B: Unemployment Insurance (UI) Information Technology (IT)  
Modernization Pre-Implementation Planning Checklist Report Instructions

**Unemployment Insurance (UI) Information Technology (IT)  
Modernization Pre-Implementation Planning Checklist  
Report**

U.S. Department of Labor  
Employment and Training Administration  
Form ETA 9177

| <b>UI IT Modernization Pre-Implementation Planning Checklist Report</b>            |                            |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>State Name:</b>                                                                 | <b>Date of Submission:</b> |
| <b>Project Name:</b>                                                               |                            |
| <b>Contact Information:</b><br>(Name, Title, Address, Phone Number, Email Address) |                            |

**Summary of Project:**

1. Functionality is Fully Available or Workaround in Place
  - 1.1. All benefit and tax functions have been fully tested and are fully operational (unless work around(s) planned for and tested) including, but not limited to:
    - 1.1.1. Claims Filing;  
For all supported programs: Regular UI, Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees, Unemployment Compensation for Ex-Servicemembers, Combined Wage Claim, Disaster Unemployment Assistance, Trade Readjustment Allowances, any extensions, etc.
    - 1.1.2. Monetary determinations;
    - 1.1.3. Non-monetary determinations;  
Including separation and non-separation issues including automated holds that flags issues requiring adjudication
    - 1.1.4. Continued Claims processing;
    - 1.1.5. Benefit payment mechanisms;  
Including (as applicable): direct deposit, debit card, and checks
    - 1.1.6. Employer liability determinations;
    - 1.1.7. Tax rate computation;
    - 1.1.8. Employer Delinquency Enforcement;
    - 1.1.9. Employer Tax and Wage report processing;
    - 1.1.10. Benefit Charging;
    - 1.1.11. Appeals.
  - 1.2. Federal reporting functions, including Benefits Accuracy Measurement (BAM) and UI Data Validation, have been fully tested and are fully operational
  - 1.3. State UI program management reporting functions, such as tracking of initial and continued claims by age, management dashboard, and ad hoc and system logging reports, have been fully tested and are fully operational
  - 1.4. Interfaces with call center operations have been fully tested and are fully operational
  - 1.5. Interstate Connection (ICON) network interfaces have been fully tested and are fully

operational

- 1.6. Other external interfaces, such as those required to retrieve wage record data, automatic cross matches for identity or other integrity purposes, have been fully tested and are fully operational
- 1.7. System generated forms and correspondence have been fully tested and are fully operational
- 1.8. Printing processes have been fully tested and are fully operational
- 1.9. Imaging and scanning, as needed, have been fully tested and are fully operational
- 1.10. Batch Processes, including execution timelines, have been fully tested and are fully operational
- 1.11. Workflows have been verified and adjusted by conducting thorough review of system generated issue flags/triggers to ensure they are necessary
- 1.12. System error handling is in operation and will:
  - 1.12.1. Ensure process is in place to identify, track, and address system errors;
  - 1.12.2. Procedures developed to document and communicate any system work-around or resolution;
  - 1.12.3. Ensure Help Desk available to support staff;
  - 1.12.4. System error messages are understandable.
- 1.13. Ensure workarounds are established and fully tested and exercised with staff for system functionality that is deferred or necessary to address known system issue
- 1.14. Business knowledge has been transferred to appropriate agency/staff on how to operate system, including role management, configuration settings and management, dashboards and reporting
- 1.15. End user support, problem reporting and resolution protocols are in place
- 1.16. All user roles have been configured/set-up and tested
  - 1.16.1. Users with appropriate permissions can easily change staff role assignments directly in the application.

2. External Alternate Access Options and Usability Issues Addressed

2.1. Alternative Access Options

In compliance with ETA guidance, the new system supports alternative access options for individuals with barriers to filing by phone or on-line, such as those with Limited English Proficiency (LEP), disabilities, literacy issues including computer literacy, and computer access issues, etc.

2.2. Websites and other forms of communications, such as brochures and posters, are in place to clearly identify alternative access points that effectively communicate to the population with such barriers as described in section 2.1

2.3. All staff are fully trained on how to assist individuals with access barriers to alternative filing options

2.4. Staff and customer system access to new system are defined, including processes to migrate existing credentials and/or establish new credentials

2.5. Usability:

2.5.1. Websites meet 508 compliance standards and are translated for identified significant population language groups within the state, including correspondence as applicable;

2.5.2. On-line Web content is clear, understandable(preferably tested by appropriate customer population);

2.5.3. Ensure Interactive Voice Response (IVR) phraseology is clear and understandable.

3. Policies/Procedures Development and Dissemination
  - 3.1. Policy and procedural changes coinciding with UI system modernization are developed and disseminated
  - 3.2. Policies for data security, including those for handling privacy and confidential data are developed and disseminated
  - 3.3. Policies for data retention and data disposal are developed and disseminated
  - 3.4. Staff is fully trained on new policies and procedures
  - 3.5. Any updates to organizational structure are coordinated with human resources department and disseminated agency-wide
  - 3.6. Any new or modified roles are clearly defined, and staff are appropriately trained

4. Technical Preparation

- 4.1. Data conversion is complete and successful, including:
  - 4.1.1. New system results checked and reconciled against legacy system results;
  - 4.1.2. Spot checks conducted for particular areas of interest;
  - 4.1.3. System blackout period is benchmarked, if appropriate.
- 4.2. Independent Verification & Validation conducted, as needed
- 4.3. Bridging processes between applications/systems in place as needed (for example, new benefits system to legacy tax system or the inverse)
- 4.4. Comprehensive User Acceptance Testing (UAT):
  - 4.4.1. UAT conducted with positive results and conducted again following any additional system changes;
  - 4.4.2. System defects are systematically tracked and remedied;
  - 4.4.3. Defect tracking processes are in place post “go-live” (in conjunction with development vendor);
  - 4.4.4. System help verified;
  - 4.4.5. Logging and exception handling verified.
- 4.5. Capacity developed to rapidly identify system flaws and make immediate fixes
- 4.6. Contingency / Back-up plan is in place if new system fails – particularly if no overlap of legacy and new system at “go live” point
- 4.7. Incoming phone capacity (lines and staff) are adjusted for anticipated increases in call volume, including:
  - 4.7.1. Call Centers, as applicable;
  - 4.7.2. Any other Agency unit that will conduct triage of system issues with customers.
- 4.8. “Go-Live” decision points (show stoppers) outlined and followed
- 4.9. System performance is checked under peak user loads, including complex transactions, prior to “go-live”

4.10. System availability:

4.10.1. Demonstrated system availability under heavy loads for sustained period of times;

4.10.2. Monitor computing resource consumption (processors, memory, Input/Output, etc.) .

4.11. IT system operations reporting is available, including management dashboard, ad hoc reports, and system logging and audit trails, as needed

4.12. Production configuration defined and in place

4.13. Automated production build /testing/environment promotion process is in place for post-deploy defect fixes and enhancements

4.14. All agency users and their roles established and verified in the system

4.15. Data and System security verified and validated, including systems required for data exchanges for Social Security Administration and Treasury Offset Program interfaces

4.16. Other internal system controls are verified and validated to ensure security and confidentiality of data

4.17. IT knowledge transfer to ensure agency can maintain and support the system

4.18. Transition planning and execution post-warranty or maintenance phase is validated with vendor.

4.19. Service delivery strategies at “go-live”:

4.19.1. Ensure service delivery strategies are clearly identified, made known to staff, and fully communicated to customers;

4.19.2. Ensure adequate communications regarding expectations to customers if black-out periods are utilized.

5. Call Center /Customer Service Operations

- 5.1. Call center standard operational procedures adapted, as appropriate
- 5.2. Call Center Staff and/or customer service representatives (CSRs) fully trained, including:
  - 5.2.1. CSRs/agents participated in system UAT;
  - 5.2.2. CSRs/agents, supervisors, managers trained in the use of the new system;
  - 5.2.3. Cross train staff and/or staff augmentation, particularly to manage inquiries.
- 5.3. Modernization system and operations help desk information provided to all front-line CSR staff
- 5.4. Front-line and management staff know triage process when a system issue arises, and issue escalation processes are clearly defined and understood by staff
- 5.5. Scheduled team meetings daily and, as needed, to address:
  - 5.5.1. New System Issues;
  - 5.5.2. Customer Complaints;
  - 5.5.3. New operational or procedural issues.

6. Staffing/Staff Training on New System Operations
  - 6.1. Training materials and tools to support new processes (desk guides, handbooks, etc.) are fully developed and provided to management and staff
  - 6.2. Management and staff fully trained on new system features and operations broadly and in relation to their specific job responsibilities.
  - 6.3. Additional Staffing Needs Identified and Secured to address:
    - 6.3.1. Call Center(s) (calls can dramatically increase during a conversion);
    - 6.3.2. Adjudication Staff (modernized systems tend to contain more automated flags that raise issues requiring adjudication);
    - 6.3.3. Appeals Staff (the number of appeals may increase following a conversion as a result of new automated processes that may impact claimants' benefits or employers' liability);
    - 6.3.4. Other support functions such as integrity-related activities.

7. Staff and Customer Help Desk Support
  - 7.1. Procedures established for escalation processes, triage processes of system technical/functional issues, communication channels, and coordination with Call Centers, as applicable
  - 7.2. Dry-runs of procedures with Help Desk staff are conducted
  - 7.3. Adequately staffed with modernization testers / Subject Matter Experts/Business Analysts, and Project Team members
  - 7.4. Contact information is published and disseminated to appropriate personnel
  - 7.5. Procedures to categorize and track system issues based on help request are in place (e.g., credential/access issue, performance, questions needing clarification, etc.)

8. Management Oversight

- 8.1. Managers are fully trained on management features and reporting processes in the system
- 8.2. Managers are prepared to support staff if system issues arise
- 8.3. Additional management meetings are scheduled during transition to identify and resolve issues

9. Vendor Support/Communications

- 9.1. Process for addressing post implementation system fixes with vendor is in place prior to implementation
- 9.2. Process for tracking system and scheduling post-implementation system issues are in place
- 9.3. Routine, daily meetings with the vendor during transition scheduled to identify and prioritize system issues for as long as needed
- 9.4. Ensure a process to track the implementation of deferred functionalities

10. Communications

10.1. Staff Communications:

10.1.1. Staff are fully briefed on implementation plan (in addition to being fully trained);

10.1.2. Staff are provided with clear instructions on how to handle system issues if they arise.

10.2. Claimant and Employer Communications:

10.2.1. Employer and Claimant outreach regarding roll-out of new system;

10.2.2. System "go-live" date disseminated;

10.2.3. System black-out period, if needed, and methods to conduct business during this phase will be clearly communicated;

10.2.4. Agency contact information is disseminated;

10.2.5. System "how-to information" provided.

10.3. Public Communications:

10.3.1. State stakeholders notified in advanced;

10.3.2. System "go-live" date disseminated;

10.3.3. System black-out period, if needed, is communicated.

### Certification

|                                              |  |              |
|----------------------------------------------|--|--------------|
| <b>Certifying Official:</b><br>(Name, Title) |  |              |
| <b>Signature:</b>                            |  |              |
| <b>Telephone Number:</b>                     |  | <b>Date:</b> |
| <b>Email Address:</b>                        |  |              |

OMB Control Number: 1205-0527

Expiration Date: 05/31/2020

**Unemployment Insurance (UI) Information Technology (IT)  
Modernization Pre-Implementation Planning Checklist Report  
Instructions**

Employment and Training Administration  
United States Department of Labor

ETA 9177

This reporting requirement is approved under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, OMB Control No. 1205-0527, expiring 05/31/2020. Persons are not required to respond to this collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB number. State Workforce Agency reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 2 hours for reviewing, 20 hours for planning, and 120 hours for reporting. This includes time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and reviewing the collection of information. This collection of information is for general program oversight, evaluation and performance assessment. Responses are required to obtain or retain a Federal benefit. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to the U. S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, Office of Unemployment Insurance, 200 Constitution Avenue, NW, Room S-4524, Washington, D.C. 20210.

**I. GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS**

The unemployment insurance (UI) information technology (IT) Modernization Pre-implementation Checklist Report is collected to assist state UI agencies in preparing to launch a modernized UI IT system, which supports administration of UI Benefits and/or UI Tax operations. Because the launch of an UI IT system is critical to a state's ability to administer its UI program, the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration (ETA) requires any state that is preparing to launch a new UI IT system to certify that it has reviewed and accomplished or has developed an appropriate plan addressing the items detailed in the Pre-Implementation checklist. The checklist will be used by ETA to identify any technical assistance needs of the state UI agency prior to an implementation of a new UI IT system.

**II. DUE DATES**

The UI IT Modernization Pre-Implementation Planning Checklist Report must be completed and submitted to ETA approximately 180 days (6 months) prior to the state's projected implementation "go live" date.

**III. SUBMISSION PROCEDURES**

The UI IT Modernization Pre-implementation Planning Checklist Report and any supporting documentation must be submitted by email to the appropriate ETA Regional Office. The ETA Regional and National Office will work collaboratively in reviewing the Report and supporting documents. Any clarifications or follow-up will be conducted via email and conference calls within 30 days upon receipt of the Report. Any modifications to the original Report must be submitted by a state through the ETA Regional Office.

## **Instructions for Completing the UI IT Modernization Pre-Implementation Planning Checklist Report**

In general, the document contains four (4) parts:

1. Cover Page
2. State General Information
3. UI IT Modernization Project Categories
4. Certification

Sections No. 2 (“State General Information”) and No. 3 (“UI IT Modernization Project Categories”) require fillable content. The instructions below, address how the state is to complete the report.

### **State General Information**

The State General Information section consists of five (5) sub-elements in a table format.

- 1. State Name:**  
Enter the name of the State Workforce Agency (SWA) who is providing the information. (e.g. State of Mississippi)
- 2. Date of Submission:**  
Enter the date when the completed report is submitted. Date format must follow mm/dd/yyyy format (e.g. 06/13/2015)
- 3. Project Name:**  
Enter the proper name of the UI IT modernization project. (e.g. The Mississippi, Rhode Island, and Maine Consortium (MRM))
- 4. Contact Information:**  
Provide the contact information (i.e., **Name, Title, Address, Phone Number, Email Address.**) for the person who will serve as the primary point of contact for any questions or follow up that ETA may have regarding the report. This may be a different person than the state certifying official. It may be the state official who is the project lead responsible for the day-to-day operation and implementation of the UI IT Modernization project.
- 5. Summary of Project**  
Provide an executive summary of the UI IT Modernization project. This information will include the project title and purpose, the project timeline and key milestones, and a narrative description of the project implementation status.

### **UI IT Modernization Project Categories**

This comprehensive checklist denotes critical functional areas that a SWA should verify prior to launching a modernized UI system. This includes, but is not limited to, technical IT functions and UI business processes that interface with the new system. The list of critical areas identified in the checklist comprises ten (10) distinct project categories with associated sub-elements including:

1. Functionality (Fully Available or Workaround in Place)
2. External Alternate Access Options and Usability Issues
3. Policies/Procedures Development and Dissemination
4. Technical Preparation
5. Call Center /Customer Service Operations
6. Staffing/Staff Training on New System Operations
7. Staff and Customer Help Desk Support
8. Management Oversight
9. Vendor Support
10. Communications

For every sub-element in the ETA 9177, the SWA is to provide supporting content to demonstrate that the SWA has addressed the specific sub-element. For each sub-element, the SWA is expected to address the issue including, but not limited to:

- An overall status report
- A brief report explaining the status of the project as it relates to the particular sub-element,
- Attach explanations of any workarounds concerning the processes in the sub-element,
- Attach explanations if implementation of the new system concerning specific processes for the sub-element will be delayed,
- Attach explanations for added clarity and/or to support a narrative,
- Mitigation proposals for addressing any problems,
- New project timelines if applicable, and/or
- Any discussion of identified technical assistance needs for the successful completion of the project.

**Certification**

The Certification section consists of five (5) sub-elements in a table format.

1. **Certifying Official:**  
Provide the name and title of the state official who is certifying the submission of the report to ETA.
2. **Signature:**  
Provide the signature of the state official who is certifying the submission of the report to ETA.
3. **Telephone Number:**  
Provide the area code and telephone number of the state official who is certifying the submission of the report to ETA. The number should be in the following format:  
(((###) ### - #####)
4. **Date:**  
Provide the date when the certifying official signed the Report. Date format must follow mm/dd/yyyy format (e.g. 06/13/2015)
5. **Email Address:**  
Provide the email address of the state official who is certifying the submission of the report to ETA.

**Unemployment Insurance (UI) Information Technology (IT)  
Modernization Pre-Implementation Planning Checklist  
Report**

U.S. Department of Labor  
Employment and Training Administration  
Form ETA 9177

| <b>UI IT Modernization Pre-Implementation Planning Checklist Report</b>            |                            |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>State Name:</b>                                                                 | <b>Date of Submission:</b> |
| <b>Project Name:</b>                                                               |                            |
| <b>Contact Information:</b><br>(Name, Title, Address, Phone Number, Email Address) |                            |

**Summary of Project:**

1. Functionality is Fully Available or Workaround in Place
  - 1.1. All benefit and tax functions have been fully tested and are fully operational (unless work around(s) planned for and tested) including, but not limited to:
    - 1.1.1. Claims Filing;  
For all supported programs: Regular UI, Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees, Unemployment Compensation for Ex-Servicemembers, Combined Wage Claim, Disaster Unemployment Assistance, Trade Readjustment Allowances, any extensions, etc.
    - 1.1.2. Monetary determinations;
    - 1.1.3. Non-monetary determinations;  
Including separation and non-separation issues including automated holds that flags issues requiring adjudication
    - 1.1.4. Continued Claims processing;
    - 1.1.5. Benefit payment mechanisms;  
Including (as applicable): direct deposit, debit card, and checks
    - 1.1.6. Employer liability determinations;
    - 1.1.7. Tax rate computation;
    - 1.1.8. Employer Delinquency Enforcement;
    - 1.1.9. Employer Tax and Wage report processing;
    - 1.1.10. Benefit Charging;
    - 1.1.11. Appeals.
  - 1.2. Federal reporting functions, including Benefits Accuracy Measurement (BAM) and UI Data Validation, have been fully tested and are fully operational
  - 1.3. State UI program management reporting functions, such as tracking of initial and continued claims by age, management dashboard, and ad hoc and system logging reports, have been fully tested and are fully operational
  - 1.4. Interfaces with call center operations have been fully tested and are fully operational
  - 1.5. Interstate Connection (ICON) network interfaces have been fully tested and are fully

operational

- 1.6. Other external interfaces, such as those required to retrieve wage record data, automatic cross matches for identity or other integrity purposes, have been fully tested and are fully operational
- 1.7. System generated forms and correspondence have been fully tested and are fully operational
- 1.8. Printing processes have been fully tested and are fully operational
- 1.9. Imaging and scanning, as needed, have been fully tested and are fully operational
- 1.10. Batch Processes, including execution timelines, have been fully tested and are fully operational
- 1.11. Workflows have been verified and adjusted by conducting thorough review of system generated issue flags/triggers to ensure they are necessary
- 1.12. System error handling is in operation and will:
  - 1.12.1. Ensure process is in place to identify, track, and address system errors;
  - 1.12.2. Procedures developed to document and communicate any system work-around or resolution;
  - 1.12.3. Ensure Help Desk available to support staff;
  - 1.12.4. System error messages are understandable.
- 1.13. Ensure workarounds are established and fully tested and exercised with staff for system functionality that is deferred or necessary to address known system issue
- 1.14. Business knowledge has been transferred to appropriate agency/staff on how to operate system, including role management, configuration settings and management, dashboards and reporting
- 1.15. End user support, problem reporting and resolution protocols are in place
- 1.16. All user roles have been configured/set-up and tested
  - 1.16.1. Users with appropriate permissions can easily change staff role assignments directly in the application.

2. External Alternate Access Options and Usability Issues Addressed

2.1. Alternative Access Options

In compliance with ETA guidance, the new system supports alternative access options for individuals with barriers to filing by phone or on-line, such as those with Limited English Proficiency (LEP), disabilities, literacy issues including computer literacy, and computer access issues, etc.

2.2. Websites and other forms of communications, such as brochures and posters, are in place to clearly identify alternative access points that effectively communicate to the population with such barriers as described in section 2.1

2.3. All staff are fully trained on how to assist individuals with access barriers to alternative filing options

2.4. Staff and customer system access to new system are defined, including processes to migrate existing credentials and/or establish new credentials

2.5. Usability:

2.5.1. Websites meet 508 compliance standards and are translated for identified significant population language groups within the state, including correspondence as applicable;

2.5.2. On-line Web content is clear, understandable(preferably tested by appropriate customer population);

2.5.3. Ensure Interactive Voice Response (IVR) phraseology is clear and understandable.

3. Policies/Procedures Development and Dissemination
  - 3.1. Policy and procedural changes coinciding with UI system modernization are developed and disseminated
  - 3.2. Policies for data security, including those for handling privacy and confidential data are developed and disseminated
  - 3.3. Policies for data retention and data disposal are developed and disseminated
  - 3.4. Staff is fully trained on new policies and procedures
  - 3.5. Any updates to organizational structure are coordinated with human resources department and disseminated agency-wide
  - 3.6. Any new or modified roles are clearly defined, and staff are appropriately trained

4. Technical Preparation
  - 4.1. Data conversion is complete and successful, including:
    - 4.1.1. New system results checked and reconciled against legacy system results;
    - 4.1.2. Spot checks conducted for particular areas of interest;
    - 4.1.3. System blackout period is benchmarked, if appropriate.
  - 4.2. Independent Verification & Validation conducted, as needed
  - 4.3. Bridging processes between applications/systems in place as needed (for example, new benefits system to legacy tax system or the inverse)
  - 4.4. Comprehensive User Acceptance Testing (UAT):
    - 4.4.1. UAT conducted with positive results and conducted again following any additional system changes;
    - 4.4.2. System defects are systematically tracked and remedied;
    - 4.4.3. Defect tracking processes are in place post “go-live” (in conjunction with development vendor);
    - 4.4.4. System help verified;
    - 4.4.5. Logging and exception handling verified.
  - 4.5. Capacity developed to rapidly identify system flaws and make immediate fixes
  - 4.6. Contingency / Back-up plan is in place if new system fails – particularly if no overlap of legacy and new system at “go live” point
  - 4.7. Incoming phone capacity (lines and staff) are adjusted for anticipated increases in call volume, including:
    - 4.7.1. Call Centers, as applicable;
    - 4.7.2. Any other Agency unit that will conduct triage of system issues with customers.
  - 4.8. “Go-Live” decision points (show stoppers) outlined and followed
  - 4.9. System performance is checked under peak user loads, including complex transactions, prior to “go-live”

4.10. System availability:

4.10.1. Demonstrated system availability under heavy loads for sustained period of times;

4.10.2. Monitor computing resource consumption (processors, memory, Input/Output, etc.) .

4.11. IT system operations reporting is available, including management dashboard, ad hoc reports, and system logging and audit trails, as needed

4.12. Production configuration defined and in place

4.13. Automated production build /testing/environment promotion process is in place for post-deploy defect fixes and enhancements

4.14. All agency users and their roles established and verified in the system

4.15. Data and System security verified and validated, including systems required for data exchanges for Social Security Administration and Treasury Offset Program interfaces

4.16. Other internal system controls are verified and validated to ensure security and confidentiality of data

4.17. IT knowledge transfer to ensure agency can maintain and support the system

4.18. Transition planning and execution post-warranty or maintenance phase is validated with vendor

4.19. Service delivery strategies at “go-live”:

4.19.1. Ensure service delivery strategies are clearly identified, made known to staff, and fully communicated to customers;

4.19.2. Ensure adequate communications regarding expectations to customers if black-out periods are utilized.

5. Call Center /Customer Service Operations
  - 5.1. Call center standard operational procedures adapted, as appropriate
  - 5.2. Call Center Staff and/or customer service representatives (CSRs) fully trained, including:
    - 5.2.1. CSRs/agents participated in system UAT;
    - 5.2.2. CSRs/agents, supervisors, managers trained in the use of the new system;
    - 5.2.3. Cross train staff and/or staff augmentation, particularly to manage inquiries.
  - 5.3. Modernization system and operations help desk information provided to all front-line CSR staff
  - 5.4. Front-line and management staff know triage process when a system issue arises, and issue escalation processes are clearly defined and understood by staff
  - 5.5. Scheduled team meetings daily and, as needed, to address:
    - 5.5.1. New System Issues;
    - 5.5.2. Customer Complaints;
    - 5.5.3. New operational or procedural issues.

6. Staffing/Staff Training on New System Operations
  - 6.1. Training materials and tools to support new processes (desk guides, handbooks, etc.) are fully developed and provided to management and staff
  - 6.2. Management and staff fully trained on new system features and operations broadly and in relation to their specific job responsibilities.
  - 6.3. Additional Staffing Needs Identified and Secured to address:
    - 6.3.1. Call Center(s) (calls can dramatically increase during a conversion);
    - 6.3.2. Adjudication Staff (modernized systems tend to contain more automated flags that raise issues requiring adjudication);
    - 6.3.3. Appeals Staff (the number of appeals may increase following a conversion as a result of new automated processes that may impact claimants' benefits or employers' liability);
    - 6.3.4. Other support functions such as integrity-related activities.

7. Staff and Customer Help Desk Support
  - 7.1. Procedures established for escalation processes, triage processes of system technical/functional issues, communication channels, and coordination with Call Centers, as applicable
  - 7.2. Dry-runs of procedures with Help Desk staff are conducted
  - 7.3. Adequately staffed with modernization testers / Subject Matter Experts/Business Analysts, and Project Team members
  - 7.4. Contact information is published and disseminated to appropriate personnel
  - 7.5. Procedures to categorize and track system issues based on help request are in place (e.g., credential/access issue, performance, questions needing clarification, etc.)

8. Management Oversight

- 8.1. Managers are fully trained on management features and reporting processes in the system
- 8.2. Managers are prepared to support staff if system issues arise
- 8.3. Additional management meetings are scheduled during transition to identify and resolve issues

9. Vendor Support/Communications

- 9.1. Process for addressing post implementation system fixes with vendor is in place prior to implementation
- 9.2. Process for tracking system and scheduling post-implementation system issues are in place
- 9.3. Routine, daily meetings with the vendor during transition scheduled to identify and prioritize system issues for as long as needed
- 9.4. Ensure a process to track the implementation of deferred functionalities

10. Communications

10.1. Staff Communications:

10.1.1. Staff are fully briefed on implementation plan (in addition to being fully trained);

10.1.2. Staff are provided with clear instructions on how to handle system issues if they arise.

10.2. Claimant and Employer Communications:

10.2.1. Employer and Claimant outreach regarding roll-out of new system;

10.2.2. System “go-live” date disseminated;

10.2.3. System black-out period, if needed, and methods to conduct business during this phase will be clearly communicated;

10.2.4. Agency contact information is disseminated;

10.2.5. System “how-to information” provided.

10.3. Public Communications:

10.3.1. State stakeholders notified in advanced;

10.3.2. System “go-live” date disseminated;

10.3.3. System black-out period, if needed, is communicated.

### Certification

|                                              |  |              |
|----------------------------------------------|--|--------------|
| <b>Certifying Official:</b><br>(Name, Title) |  |              |
| <b>Signature:</b>                            |  |              |
| <b>Telephone Number:</b>                     |  | <b>Date:</b> |
| <b>Email Address:</b>                        |  |              |

OMB Control Number: 1205-0527

Expiration Date: 05/31/2020

## **Unemployment Insurance (UI) Information Technology (IT) Modernization Pre-Implementation Planning Checklist Report Instructions**

Employment and Training Administration  
United States Department of Labor

ETA 9177

This reporting requirement is approved under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, OMB Control No. 1205-0527, expiring 05/31/2020. Persons are not required to respond to this collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB number. State Workforce Agency reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 2 hours for reviewing, 20 hours for planning, and 120 hours for reporting. This includes time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and reviewing the collection of information. This collection of information is for general program oversight, evaluation and performance assessment. Responses are required to obtain or retain a Federal benefit. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to the U. S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, Office of Unemployment Insurance, 200 Constitution Avenue, NW, Room S-4524, Washington, D.C. 20210.

## **I. GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS**

The unemployment insurance (UI) information technology (IT) Modernization Pre-implementation Checklist Report is collected to assist state UI agencies in preparing to launch a modernized UI IT system, which supports administration of UI Benefits and/or UI Tax operations. Because the launch of an UI IT system is critical to a state's ability to administer its UI program, the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration (ETA) requires any state that is preparing to launch a new UI IT system to certify that it has reviewed and accomplished or has developed an appropriate plan addressing the items detailed in the Pre-Implementation checklist. The checklist will be used by ETA to identify any technical assistance needs of the state UI agency prior to an implementation of a new UI IT system.

## **II. DUE DATES**

The UI IT Modernization Pre-Implementation Planning Checklist Report must be completed and submitted to ETA approximately 180 days (6 months) prior to the state's projected implementation "go live" date.

## **III. SUBMISSION PROCEDURES**

The UI IT Modernization Pre-implementation Planning Checklist Report and any supporting documentation must be submitted by email to the appropriate ETA Regional Office. The ETA Regional and National Office will work collaboratively in reviewing the Report and supporting documents. Any clarifications or follow-up will be conducted via email and conference calls within 30 days upon receipt of the Report. Any modifications to the original Report must be submitted by a state through the ETA Regional Office.

## Instructions for Completing the UI IT Modernization Pre-Implementation Planning Checklist Report

In general, the document contains four (4) parts:

1. Cover Page
2. State General Information
3. UI IT Modernization Project Categories
4. Certification

Sections No. 2 (“State General Information”) and No. 3 (“UI IT Modernization Project Categories”) require fillable content. The instructions below, address how the state is to complete the report.

### State General Information

The State General Information section consists of five (5) sub-elements in a table format.

**1. State Name:**

Enter the name of the State Workforce Agency (SWA) who is providing the information. (e.g. State of Mississippi)

**2. Date of Submission:**

Enter the date when the completed report is submitted. Date format must follow mm/dd/yyyy format (e.g. 06/13/2015)

**3. Project Name:**

Enter the proper name of the UI IT modernization project. (e.g. The Mississippi, Rhode Island, and Maine Consortium (MRM))

**4. Contact Information:**

Provide the contact information (i.e., **Name, Title, Address, Phone Number, Email Address**.) for the person who will serve as the primary point of contact for any questions or follow up that ETA may have regarding the report. This may be a different person than the state certifying official. It may be the state official who is the project lead responsible for the day-to-day operation and implementation of the UI IT Modernization project.

**5. Summary of Project**

Provide an executive summary of the UI IT Modernization project. This information will include the project title and purpose, the project timeline and key milestones, and a narrative description of the project implementation status.

## **UI IT Modernization Project Categories**

This comprehensive checklist denotes critical functional areas that a SWA should verify prior to launching a modernized UI system. This includes, but is not limited to, technical IT functions and UI business processes that interface with the new system. The list of critical areas identified in the checklist comprises ten (10) distinct project categories with associated sub-elements including:

1. Functionality (Fully Available or Workaround in Place)
2. External Alternate Access Options and Usability Issues
3. Policies/Procedures Development and Dissemination
4. Technical Preparation
5. Call Center /Customer Service Operations
6. Staffing/Staff Training on New System Operations
7. Staff and Customer Help Desk Support
8. Management Oversight
9. Vendor Support
10. Communications

For every sub-element in the ETA 9177, the SWA is to provide supporting content to demonstrate that the SWA has addressed the specific sub-element. For each sub-element, the SWA is expected to address the issue including, but not limited to:

- An overall status report
- A brief report explaining the status of the project as it relates to the particular sub-element,
- Attach explanations of any workarounds concerning the processes in the sub-element,
- Attach explanations if implementation of the new system concerning specific processes for the sub-element will be delayed,
- Attach explanations for added clarity and/or to support a narrative,
- Mitigation proposals for addressing any problems,
- New project timelines if applicable, and/or
- Any discussion of identified technical assistance needs for the successful completion of the project.

**Certification**

The Certification section consists of five (5) sub-elements in a table format.

1. **Certifying Official:**  
Provide the name and title of the state official who is certifying the submission of the report to ETA.
2. **Signature:**  
Provide the signature of the state official who is certifying the submission of the report to ETA.
3. **Telephone Number:**  
Provide the area code and telephone number of the state official who is certifying the submission of the report to ETA. The number should be in the following format:  
(###) ### - #####
4. **Date:**  
Provide the date when the certifying official signed the Report. Date format must follow mm/dd/yyyy format (e.g. 06/13/2015)
5. **Email Address:**  
Provide the email address of the state official who is certifying the submission of the report to ETA.