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

Functionality is Fully Available or Workaround in Place for the following:

- All benefit and tax functions have been fully tested and are fully operational (unless work around planned for and tested) including, but not limited to:
    - 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.);
    - Monetary determinations;
    - Non-monetary determinations (separation and non-separation issues including automated holds that flags issues requiring adjudication);
    - Continued Claims processing;
    - Benefit payment mechanisms (direct deposit, debit card, checks);
    - Employer liability determinations;
    - Tax rate computation;
    - Employer Delinquency Enforcement;
    - Employer Tax and Wage report processing;
    - Benefit Charging; and
    - Appeals.
- Federal reporting, including Benefit Accuracy Measurement (BAM) and UI Data Validation
- State UI program management reporting (for example: tracking of initial and continued claims by age), management dashboard, ad hoc and system logging reports, as needed
- Interfaces with call center operations
- Interstate Connection (ICON) network interface
- Other external interfaces, such as those required to retrieve wage record data, automatic cross matches for identity or other integrity purposes, etc.
- System generated forms and correspondence
- Printing processes
- Imaging and scanning, as needed
- Batch Processes, including execution timelines
- Workflows verified and adjusted by conducting thorough review of system generated issue flags/trigger to ensure they are necessary
- System error handling
    - Ensure process is in place to identify, track, and address system errors;
    - Procedures developed to document and communicate any system work-around or resolution
    - Ensure Help Desk available to support staff
- Ensure workarounds are established and fully tested and exercised with staff for system functionality that is deferred or necessary to address known system issues

- Business knowledge is transferred to appropriate agency/staff on how to operate the system, including role management, configuration settings and management, dashboards and reporting
- End user support, problem reporting and resolution protocols are in place

External Alternate Access Options and Usability Issues Addressed

- In compliance with ETA guidance, the 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, computer access issues, etc.
- Websites and other forms of communications (for example, brochures, posters) are in place to clearly identify alternative access points that effectively communicate to the population with such barriers
- All staff are fully trained on how to assist individuals with access barriers to alternative filing options
- Staff and customer system access to the new system are defined including process for migrating existing credentials and/or establishing new credentials
- Other Usability
    - Websites meet 508 compliance standards and are translated for identified significant population language groups within the state
    - On-line Web screen content is clear, understandable (preferably tested by appropriate customer population)
    - Ensure Interactive Voice Response (IVR) phraseology is clear and understandable

Policies/Procedures Development and Dissemination

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

Technical Preparation

- Data conversion is complete and successful
    - New system results have been checked and reconciled against legacy system results
    - Spot check for particular areas of interest is complete
    - System blackout period is benchmarked, if appropriate
- Independent Verification &Validation conducted, as needed

- Bridging processes between applications/systems in place as needed (for example, new benefits system to legacy tax system or the inverse)
- Comprehensive User Acceptance Testing (UAT)
    - UAT conducted with positive results and conducted again following system changes, if needed
    - System defects are systematically tracked and remedied
    - Defect tracking processes are in place post "go-live" (in conjunction with development vendor)
    - System help is verified
    - Logging and exception handling is verified
- Capacity is developed to rapidly identify system flaws and make immediate fixes
- Contingency/Back-up plan is in place if new system fails – particularly if no overlap of legacy and new system at "go live" point
- Incoming phone capacity (lines and staff) are adjusted for anticipated increases in call volume
    - Call Centers, as applicable
    - Any other Agency unit that will conduct triage of system issues with customers
- "Go-Live" decision points (show stoppers) outlined and followed
- System performance is checked under peak user loads, including complex transactions, prior to go-live
- System availability
    - Demonstrated system availability under heavy loads for sustained period of times
    - Monitor computing resource consumption (processors, memory, Input/Output, etc.)
- IT system operations reporting, including management dashboard, ad hoc reports, and system logging and audit trails is available, as needed
- Production configuration is defined and in place
- Automated production build /testing/environment promotion processes are in place for post-deploy defect fixes and enhancements
- All agency users and their roles are established and verified in the system
- Data and system security verified and validated, including those required for data exchanges for Social Security Administration, Treasury Offset Program interfaces
- Other internal system controls are verified and validated to ensure security and confidentiality of data
- IT knowledge transfer to ensure agency can maintain and support the system
- Transition planning and execution post-warranty or maintenance phase is validated with the vendor
- Service delivery strategies at "go-live"
    - Ensure service delivery strategies are clearly identified, made known to staff, and fully communicated to customers
    - Ensure adequate communications regarding expectations to customers if black-out periods are utilized,

Call Center /Customer Service Operations

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

Staffing/Staff Training on New System Operations

- Training materials and tools to support new processes (desk guides, handbooks, etc.) are fully developed and provided to management and staff
- Management and staff fully trained on new system features and operations as it relates to their specific job responsibilities
- Additional Staffing Needs Identified and Secured for:
    - Call Center (calls can dramatically increase after an implementation)
    - Adjudication Staff (new systems tend to have the ability to raise more issues that require adjudication)
    - Appeals Staff (appeals tend to go up after an implementation)
    - Other support functions such as integrity-related activities

Staff and Customer Help Desk Support

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

Management Oversight

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

Vendor Support/Communications

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

Communications

- Staff Communications
  - Staff are fully briefed on implementation plan (in addition to being fully trained)
  - Staff are provided with clear instructions on how to handle system issues if they arise
- Claimant and Employer Communications
  - Employer and Claimant outreach for the roll-out of new system
  - System "go-live" date disseminated
  - System black-out period, if needed, and methods to conduct business during this phase will be clearly communicated
  - Agency contact information is disseminated
  - System "how-to information" provided
- Public Communications
  - State stakeholders notified in advanced
  - System go-live date disseminated
  - System black-out period, if needed, is communicated