Promising Practices and Sample Projects

The Department has identified the following promising practices for states to consider when developing their Full Project Plans.

- **Targeted and High-Value Changes:** The funds should be utilized for specific improvements that enhance the flexibility and performance of state systems in measurable ways. It is important to focus on making incremental changes rather than complete system overhauls.
- **Software Reuse and Collaboration:** States are strongly encouraged to participate in making the resulting code or artifacts from their efforts available as open source. They should also consider referencing, adapting, or reusing components developed by other states as part of this effort. This promotes software reuse and the sharing of best practices across states, aligning with the DOL's broader vision for UI IT modernization.
- **Agile and Human-Centered Approach:** States should adopt agile methodologies and prioritize a human-centered approach. This means delivering software in iterative and incremental cycles, seeking early and frequent feedback from users, and using that feedback to inform the evolution of solutions. This approach ensures that user needs are met effectively and efficiently.
- **Continual Process of Modernization:** Modernization is an ongoing process that involves changes to technology, people, and processes. States should consider how new technologies will require corresponding process changes and evaluate the need for new or different skills to fully support the modernized systems.
- **Augmenting, not Replacing, Staff with Technology:** When considering the use of technology to streamline or automate functions, states should prioritize augmenting current staff rather than replacing them. They should carefully evaluate how to implement appropriate safeguards and controls to ensure the effective, accurate, and ethical deployment of technology.

In support of these promising practices, the following table reflects projects that states might consider, in line with the nine allowable activities described in Section 4.c.i. and Attachment I to this UIPL.

Sample Project	**Associated Activity**
States may choose to migrate systems, or specific applications, from legacy hosting platforms to the cloud. By doing so states can realize several benefits, including reduced infrastructure costs, improved scalability, and performance, particularly during periods of high claims volume, as well as improved security, accessibility, and collaboration between agencies.	Cloud Migration
States may choose to decouple system components, like claimant portals from mainframes, so that those new components can be managed independently and are easier to maintain and change.	Modular & API-driven Approaches

Sample Project	Associated Activity
States may choose to implement application program interfaces (APIs) to enable more seamless integration and interoperability between different systems and platforms, including new components that may interface with existing vendor or vendor-provided solutions.	Modular & API-driven Approaches
States may choose to make enhancements to their claimant portals, such as making it mobile-friendly, adopting plain language, and or improving the user experience, in measurable ways. In particular, the Department strongly encourages states to make enhancements that promote claimant self-service, reduce the need for manual state intervention, and/or reduce the potential for errors and delays.	Improving the Customer Experience
States may use funds to hire staff that enable and leverage data collection and feedback from claimants to drive strategic insights and measurable improvements to the customer experience. Some examples of the types of roles states may choose to invest in include product managers, user researchers, and content designers.	Improving the Customer Experience
States may choose to update legacy code to comply with accessibility standards, such as WCAG (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines) to improve access for individuals with varying needs, such as visually-impaired individuals who require screen-readers to access the web.	Improving the Customer Experience
States may choose to adopt DevOps, a software development approach that emphasizes collaboration, communication, and automation between software and business teams, to drive faster and more frequent software releases with fewer defects. Adopting a practice like DevOps requires new skillsets and cultural shifts, but also automating processes and tools, such as automating builds, tests, and deployments, implementing continuous integration and continuous deployment (CI/CD) pipelines, and embracing infrastructure as code that allows for infrastructure to be managed and scaled programmatically.	Adopting Agile Development Practices
States may choose to invest in a content management system (CMS) that allows staff to make public-facing content changes more quickly and easily.	Flexible Content Changes
State can choose to identify and refactor (*e.g.*, improve) legacy code in ways that measurably improve the speed of processing UI claims and/or improve system performance in terms of downtime, response time, and resource utilization metrics.	Outcome-driven enhancements
States may choose to implement robust error handling mechanisms and improved data validation to measurably reduce error rates.	Outcome-driven enhancements