



# Annual Report 2021

# ABOUT UI ITSC

## INTRODUCTION

The Unemployment Insurance Information Technology Support Center (UI ITSC) is a unique national collaboration of the National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA), the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) and all state workforce agencies. The UI ITSC promotes the development of information technology solutions and information sharing among state UI agencies. This annual report highlights the activities and accomplishments of UI ITSC from October 2020 to September 2021.



### MISSION

UI ITSC fosters partnerships to advance the continuous improvement of the modernization of unemployment insurance and collaboration with workforce programs.

UI ITSC facilitates the exchange of ideas and practices among states, and provides products, services, and training that help states leverage technology to meet evolving needs.



### HISTORY

In 1994, UI ITSC was founded through a grant from USDOL. Since 2009, NASWA has operated UI ITSC with funding from USDOL through an agreement with the State of Maryland.



### WHAT WE DO

#### UI IT MODERNIZATION

- Support states on UI business process improvement and IT modernization.
- Identify and share state practices and facilitate communication among states.
- Provide support from planning, through go-live, and into stabilization and maintenance.

#### TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

- Support state technical projects including application support, technical standards and guidelines development, domain specific staff augmentation, and assessment services.

#### PRODUCTS & TOOLS

- Provide cost-effective products and tools that states can leverage.
- Develop, distribute, and support products and tools, such as: shared UI components and modules; model projects and prototypes; project management portals; and other tools.

#### EDUCATION & TRAINING

- Develop educational materials and training programs for UI agencies on UI IT systems, processes, and the modernization life cycle.
- Deliver training as interactive self-paced online lessons and as instructor-led classes conducted by UI and IT subject matter experts.



### STEERING COMMITTEE 2020-2021

The UI ITSC Steering Committee provides strategic guidance and direction for UI ITSC. Membership is comprised of state and federal representatives of the unemployment insurance and IT areas.

STATE WORKFORCE ADMINISTRATORS	
Anna Hui	MO
Brett Flachsbarth*	KS
David Gerstenfeld	OR
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE DIRECTORS	
Daryle Dudzinski, <i>Vice-Chair</i>	CT
Julie Smith	OH
Kevin Burt	UT
William Walton, <i>Chair</i>	VA
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY DIRECTORS	
Jeff May	GA
Neil Shah	IA
Sue Anne Athens	NM
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR REPRESENTATIVES	
Jim Garner	USDOL
Subri Raman **	USDOL

\* Served until June 2021. \*\* Served until May 2021.

# UI IT MODERNIZATION & TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

UI ITSC supports states on UI business process improvements and IT modernization by identifying state practices, facilitating communication, sharing information among states, and providing advisory services. Additionally, UI ITSC provides the status of state UI IT modernization projects and offers resources to assist states with technology projects.

## Advisory Support Services

UI ITSC leverages its vast UI IT Modernization development and implementation project experience, including its hands-on participation in many states' successful go-lives and subsequent system stabilization activities. UI ITSC provides advisory support by using its significant experience and knowledge of system implementations to assist states in successfully navigating through impediments, hurdles, issues, and challenges to achieve a successful go-live, as well as effective stabilization and maintenance phases.

UI ITSC currently has active projects supporting the following states with modernization efforts: CA, AR, DC, DE, IA, KS, KY, MA, MO, MS, MT, ND, NV, NY, OH, OK, PA, VI, and WV. These states are at various stages of modernization. UI ITSC also provides ongoing ad-hoc support to states as they continue to enhance their systems. This includes the InnovateUI Consortium comprised of states (MS, ME, MO, WY, and CT) with a common vendor and working together in sharing components and technologies to sustain their systems and ongoing operations.

UI ITSC is a national conduit for the sharing of states' technologies, methods, and processes, helping to promote improved customer service and staff efficiencies and productivity. Through outreach and collaboration, UI ITSC conducts several forums on numerous topics with state agencies ranging from adopting new technologies to sustaining and evolving current investments.

## Cloud Services

During the COVID-19 pandemic states, with modernized systems in the Cloud benefited greatly from the ability to swiftly expand computing resources to accommodate the increased claims loads. Over the last five years UI ITSC has focused on providing Cloud advice and expertise to the states.

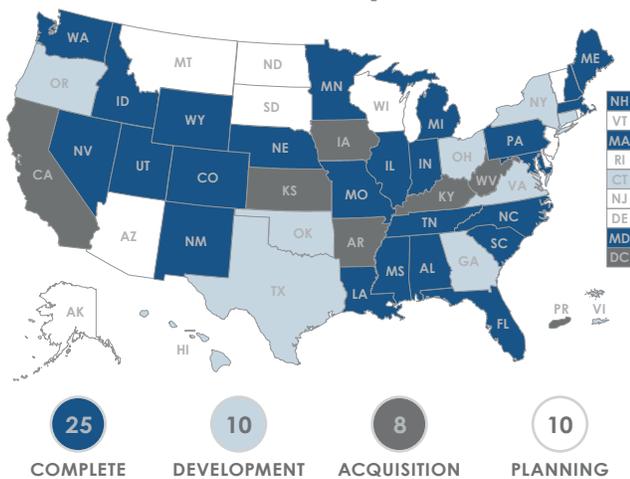
With the economies of scale pricing advantages, the increased availability of FedRAMP compliant services, and the elasticity and rapid scalability of computing resources, the prevalence of Cloud use worldwide and within the UI domain is quickly growing.

UI ITSC continues to work with states in their explorations and implementations, providing expertise across the various Cloud providers covering, but not limited to:

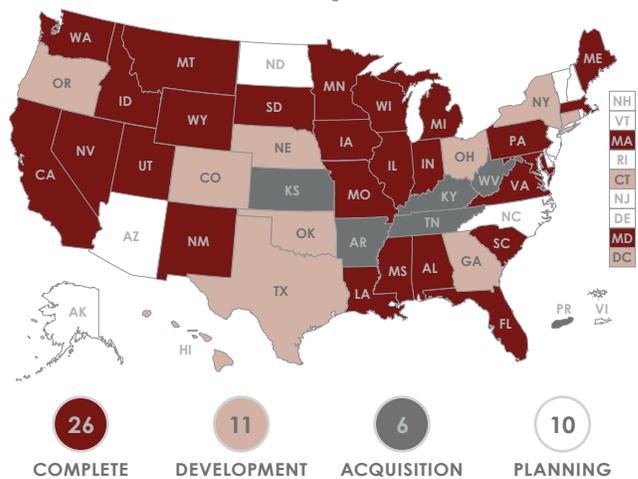
- ▶ Security (FISMA, NIST, FedRAMP compliance)
- ▶ SSA and IRS FTI TOP implementations
- ▶ Cloud services (e.g., monitoring, DevOps, autoscaling, caching, datastore options, elasticsearch, ETL, IoT, etc.)
- ▶ Migration strategies
- ▶ Disaster recovery and backup, etc.

Recently, UI ITSC developed a "Dos and Don'ts for Cloud services" document for states beginning the process of adopting Cloud technologies. This document is available to states upon request. More information on Cloud services is available on the UI ITSC website.

## UI Benefits Systems



## UI Tax Systems



# UI IT MODERNIZATION & TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

## Massachusetts Employment Modernization and Transformation Program

UI ITSC, together with Workforce ITSC, is working with the Massachusetts' Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development ("EOLWD") to provide advisory services in support of a modernized and transformed EOLWD. This project marks the first joint effort with UI ITSC and Workforce ITSC in providing advisory support to a state on an integrated UI and Workforce System.

EOLWD is undertaking a multi-year program to implement a comprehensive transformation of the policies, processes, and systems that support the operations of the Department of Unemployment Assistance and the MassHire Department of Career Services. The program is called the Employment Modernization and Transformation ("EMT") program. The goals of the EMT program are to create operational and supporting technologies that provide the workforce and employers of the Commonwealth with significantly improved access to, and delivery and management of, unemployment and re-employment benefits and services. As a result of this program, EOLWD seeks to transform business operations, modernize technology, and fortify the security of core systems.

In support of the EMT program, NASWA's UI ITSC and Workforce ITSC staff is uniquely positioned to provide knowledge of USDOL priorities, understanding of the full scope of the administration of unemployment and re-employment benefits, best practices across the nation by state unemployment and re-employment agencies, and the vendor community that support those agencies.

## National View of UI IT Systems

In 2010, UI ITSC published "A National View of UI IT Systems," a report that captured the status and condition of state UI IT systems and modernization efforts.

In July 2021, UI ITSC distributed the comprehensive survey and will be conducting follow up interviews to update the 2010 report with the current status of state UI IT Systems.

The 2021 survey and report will present UI IT Modernization efforts, challenges, and lessons learned from across the nation in the last ten years. UI ITSC is expected to release this report on the survey results by October 2021.

### 2010 Key Findings

Below are some key findings from the 2010 report which will be compared to the results of the current survey:

- ▶ The vast majority of UI IT systems are old – and based on outmoded programming languages.
- ▶ State UI IT systems are costly and difficult to support.
- ▶ Most state IT systems cannot efficiently handle today's demands.
- ▶ Modernized systems lower costs and improve services and staff productivity.

In the last decade, the 2010 study and these findings have impacted the conversation on state UI IT systems and modernization. The study has been referenced in numerous news articles, Congressional testimonies, and other reports and studies.

# PRODUCTS & TOOLS

*UI ITSC provides cost-effective products and tools that states can leverage. It also develops, distributes, and supports these products, which include UI components and modules, model projects and prototypes, project management portals, and various other tools.*

## UI ITSC Website Refresh

In March, UI ITSC launched a new and updated website. Last year, UI ITSC began an effort to review and update content on its website. In addition, the UI ITSC redesigned the look and feel of the website to follow the branding of the NASWA website and be responsive for mobile devices.

The UI ITSC's website is a unique resource for the UI community to share and access information on IT tools and solutions related to the UI program. The new website features:

### **New Design, Look and Feel**

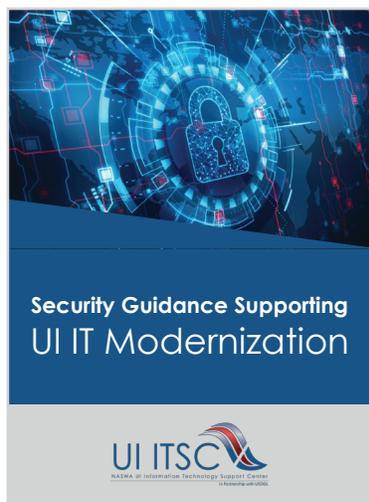
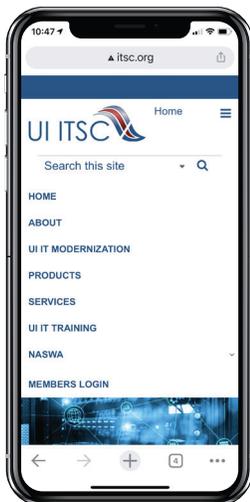
Follows the overall branding for NASWA and is fully responsive for any device or browser which provides a better and cohesive experience for our members.

### **Updated UI IT Modernization Status Maps**

UI ITSC provides an overview status of state UI IT modernization projects. The maps now display the status of UI Benefits and Tax systems separately.

### **UI IT Security Resources**

Improved UI IT Security section for state and federal UI employees. Resources include checklists on preparing for security audits, information on UI in the Cloud, and "Security Guidance Supporting UI IT Modernization."



## Security Resources for UI

In December, NASWA and UI ITSC held a webinar on UIPL 4-21 which focuses on security of UI IT systems. During the webinar, NASWA's security team highlighted sections of the UIPL that are important for UI IT systems and shared resources and services that NASWA provides to state workforce agencies.

### **Security Preparation Checklist and Website**

NASWA emphasized the need for states to review the changes to NIST SP800-53 with Revision 5. NASWA released updated resources such as security guidelines for UI IT modernization and a security preparation checklist in February, using the guidance from SP800-53 Rev 5. NASWA also launched a central location for states to access updated security resources on the UI ITSC website.

### **Security Guidance Supporting UI IT Modernization**

UI ITSC released a guidance document, "Security Guidance Supporting UI IT Modernization" which provides recommendations designed to support the inclusion of essential security controls as an integral part of modernization efforts of UI IT systems. This document is based on NIST guidance provided by SP800-53, Revision 5, "Security and Privacy Controls for Information Systems and Organizations." It focuses on the most critical areas addressed by independent assessments; these are the areas that: 1) are usually assessed, 2) often lead to negative findings, and 3) have findings that are deemed critical and require immediate remediation.

In addition, UI ITSC developed and released a worksheet to accompany the checklist. It provides System Administrators a tool for quickly reviewing the preparation of the system for assessments. It also provides management with a high-level overview of the security posture of the system.

# PRODUCTS PORTFOLIO

The UI ITSC Product Portfolio highlights the products available to all states. This portfolio describes each product and the benefits to state UI agencies.



## UI ITSC's WEBSITE

A unique online resource for the UI community to access information on UI IT tools, solutions, and resources.

### Benefits of the UI ITSC Website

- Share UI and IT information with the UI community.
- Learn online and in-person on a wide range of UI program and technical topics.
- Access product information, documentation, security information and other useful resources.



## PROJECT PORTALS

A collaborative environment for state project teams to interact and share information during the IT project lifecycle.

### Benefits of Project Portals

- Create and manage state specific portals for UI IT Modernization projects.
- Interact with the UI Community, UI ITSC, NASWA through document sharing and discussion boards.
- Secure SharePoint Environment.



## OCCUCODER

A job code matching software application developed to automatically assign occupational codes to UI claims, job orders, resumes, and more.

### Benefits of OccuCoder

- Assigns O\*NET-SOC Codes to job titles and descriptions.
- Provides a user interface for users to choose the best job code result from OccuCoder.
- Support for Spanish Language queries.



## SUTA DUMPING (SDDS)

The SUTA Dumping Detection System (SDDS) is an automated system designed to help states detect employers who may be engaged in SUTA dumping.

### Benefits of SDDS

- Quick access and easily interpreted snapshots of employment, wages, and tax data.
- Snapshots help UI staff, analysts, and auditors analyze employer accounts and movements.
- Predefined and customized queries to drill down into the data snapshots.



## UI IT GUIDEBOOK

The "UI Business Process and IT Modernization Guidebook" is a collection of best practices and lessons learned from state projects.

### Benefits of the Guidebook

- Snapshot of UI IT Modernization projects across the nation.
- Compilation of best practices and lessons learned from state projects with references and examples.
- Resource for states at any stage of their projects from strategic planning to go-live.

Visit [www.itsc.org](http://www.itsc.org)  
for more information.

# EDUCATION & TRAINING

UI ITSC develops educational materials and training programs for state UI Agencies focused on UI IT systems, processes, and the modernization life cycle. Training is delivered as interactive, self-paced, online lessons and as instructor-led classes conducted by UI and IT subject matter experts.

## Oregon BA Boot Camp for Paid Family Medical Leave and UI

In January, the UI ITSC training team conducted a series of nine 2-hour webinar sessions to deliver the Business Analyst (BA) Boot Camp training to the State of Oregon. The Boot Camp, normally held in person, was delivered virtually to about 30 participants who are working on implementing a new Paid Family and Medical Leave (PFML) system and modernizing their UI system. While the course was designed around UI IT Modernization, the UI ITSC training team customized this training using the lessons learned and examples from UI and adapted them with PFML scenarios to accommodate both UI and PFML staff attending the training.

The Boot Camp curriculum is designed to support states in planning IT projects by giving Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) hands-on experience with business analysis techniques for improving business processes; developing and documenting requirements; and working with development vendors. The training assists participants in understanding what a business requirement is and the challenges faced in defining requirements correctly. It includes practical approaches based on state-specific successful IT practices of states for eliciting and managing requirements.

## Business Analyst Boot Camp Online Lessons

Since 2015, UI ITSC has delivered a 3-day class, Business Analyst Boot Camp for UI Subject Matter Experts, onsite in 25 states. In 2021, the curriculum was presented as nine, two-hour virtual sessions over three weeks to an Oregon modernization team.

During the Pandemic, the need for virtual training increased. UI ITSC will begin to update and convert a subset of existing instructor-led modernization curriculum for in-person classes to a blended format which will include self-paced, online content, webinars, and training materials. This initial effort will serve as a proof of concept for the entire curriculum.

Creating alternative delivery methods for this content allows the dissemination of this information without requiring UI ITSC staff to travel and without state participants assembling within proximity in a classroom environment. Additionally, the blended content will be available as-needed for modernization staff, rather than requiring personnel to wait for available instructor-led sessions.

The image shows a virtual training session interface. On the left, a slide titled "Improving Business Processes" displays an agenda with five items: 1. Business Processes and How to Improve Them, 2. Top-down Methodology, 3. AS IS versus TO BE Requirements, 4. Business Process Improvement Methodologies, and 5. Other State's Processes. On the right, a slide titled "Top Down Methodology" shows a flowchart with four stages: Vision, Goals, Objectives, and Performance Measures, each with a brief description. The interface includes a top navigation bar with the UI ITSC logo and a bottom status bar with session controls and the title "Business Analyst Boot Camp for UI SMEs".



## CONTACT

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