



UI ITSC Steering Committee meeting held on October 17, 2019 with USDOL ETA Assistant Secretary John Pallasch.

Annual Report 2020

ABOUT UI ITSC



MISSION

The UI ITSC fosters partnerships to advance modernization of unemployment insurance and workforce programs, facilitates the exchange of ideas and practices among states, and provides products, services and training that help states leverage technology to meet evolving needs.

VISION

UI ITSC is a trusted partner for the effective use of information technology and related technical assistance to advance UI programs.

WHAT WE DO

- ▶ **UI IT MODERNIZATION & TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE**
Support states in UI Business Process Reengineering and IT Modernization.
- ▶ **PRODUCTS & SERVICES**
Create and grow online tools and software repository shared by states.
- ▶ **EDUCATION & TRAINING**
Provide education and training to states related to the UI IT Modernization life cycle.

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 accomplishments of UI ITSC from October 2019 to September 2020.



HOW UI ITSC STARTED...

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.

STEERING COMMITTEE

The UI ITSC Steering Committee provides strategic guidance and direction for UI ITSC. The committee is comprised of state and federal members who represent unemployment insurance and IT areas.

2019-2020 MEMBERS

State Workforce Administrators	
Anna Hui	MO
Brett Flachsbarth	KS
Kay Erickson*	OR
Unemployment Insurance Directors	
Daryle Dudzinski	CT
Kevin Burt	UT
William Walton, <i>Vice-Chair</i>	VA
Information Technology Directors	
Gail Overhouse**	CA
Jeff May, <i>Chair</i>	GA
Neil Shah	IA
Sue Anne Athens	NM
U.S. Department of Labor Representatives	
Jim Garner	USDOL
Subri Raman	USDOL

* Served until May 2020. ** Served until April 2020.

UI IT MODERNIZATION & TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

The UI ITSC provides states support by identifying and sharing best practices, coordinating communication and information sharing among states, and conducting short quality assessments to ensure that projects are following best practices and meeting requirements.

STATE ENGAGEMENT

Advisory Support Services

UI ITSC currently has active projects supporting the following states with modernization efforts: CA, CT, DE, IA, KS, KY, ME, MD, MO, MS, ND, NY, NV, OH, OK, and USVI. These states are at various stages of modernization. UI ITSC also provides ongoing ad-hoc support to about 30 states as they continue to enhance their systems.

See Page 7 on UI ITSC's activities assisting states during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Ongoing Sustainability Support

UI ITSC is continuously working with several states and consortia, including but not limited to ID, MD, ME, MO, MS, and WY that modernized and continue to collaborate to sustain their systems and ongoing operations.

Outreach and Collaboration

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 with state agencies; below are recent topics covered:

- ▶ Chatbots (IBM Watson, Google AI, Azure, AWS Connect Lex, etc.)
- ▶ Contact Management Services (Salesforce, Zendesk, ServiceNow, AWS Connect, etc.)
- ▶ Pre-Pay Fraud Filters and Controls, including using F5 WAF, together with the UI Integrity Center
- ▶ Use of Web Virtual Wait (Google, Queue-it, etc.)
- ▶ Robotic Process Automations (RPAs)
- ▶ Use of Cloud
- ▶ Microservices and Containers

Cloud Services

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.

During the COVID-19 pandemic states with modernized systems in the Cloud have 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.

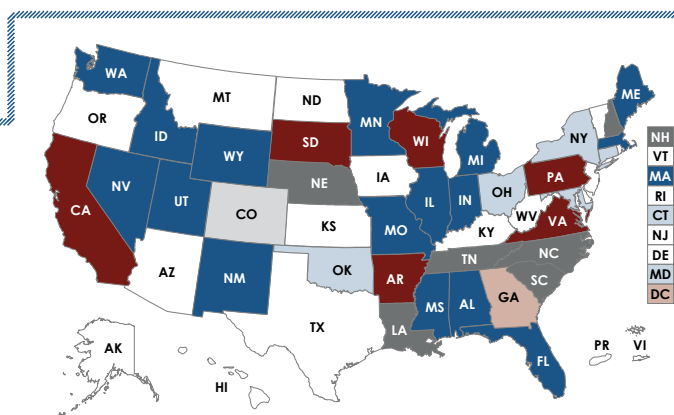
In 2017, UI ITSC partnered with MS and MA in their early adoption of the Cloud. UI ITSC also worked with other states in their explorations and implementations, providing expertise across the various Cloud providers covering, but not limited to:

- ▶ 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

In delivering Cloud advice to the states, UI ITSC also leverages the experiences, expertise, and cross pollinates with NASWA services including the AWS-based Integrity Data Hub and the migrations for UI SIDES and UI ICON to the Cloud.

Status of State UI IT Modernizations

COMPLETED	IN DEV	UI SYSTEM
6	1	Benefits System Only
6	2	Tax System Only
16	5	Benefits and Tax System
17		Planning



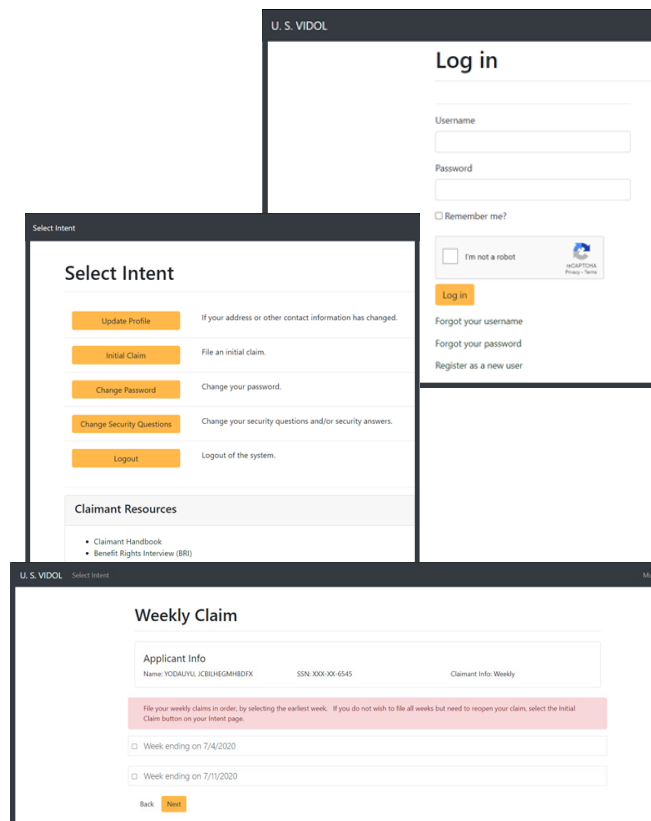
UI IT MODERNIZATION & TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

U.S. Virgin Islands Initial Claims

UI ITSC is working with the U.S. Virgin Islands Department of Labor (VIDOL) to integrate an initial and weekly claims internet application, as well as direct deposit of UI payments, to enhance their UI system. VIDOL's operations and systems were dramatically impacted by the 2017 hurricane season. This project will help improve VIDOL's service delivery and better prepare their UI System for the future.

This project is moving into the User Acceptance Testing phase of the project. Due to the increase in workload related to the COVID-19 pandemic, UI ITSC are assisting the USVI with initial testing of the application and provide test cases to USVI staff to assist as they become available to test. The system is anticipated to go live in the fall of 2020.



Preliminary screenshots of the new USVI internet application.

UPCOMING PROJECT

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.

This year, UI ITSC will be sending out a comprehensive survey and conducting follow up interviews to update the 2010 report with the current status of state UI IT Systems in 2020. The survey will be sent to all states and cover the following areas:

- ▶ What is the technology basis for the state's current benefits and tax systems?
- ▶ What are the major characteristics of the state's current benefits and tax systems?
- ▶ What service delivery methods are in use in the state to achieve various UI functions (e.g., self-service via the internet, call centers, and/or interactive voice response systems)?
- ▶ What is the state's level of systems modernization (agency, staff and technology)?
- ▶ What plans does the state have for future systems modernizations?

The 2020 survey and report will present UI IT Modernization efforts, challenges, and lessons learned from across the nation in the last ten years.

2010 Key Findings

Below are some key findings from the 2010 report which will be compared to the results of the upcoming 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.
- ▶ State consortia: a new concept that allows states to share the expense of UI IT Modernization.

PRODUCTS & SERVICES

The UI ITSC provides states with products and services that multi-state consortium and individual states can leverage cost-effectively. The UI ITSC develops, distributes, and supports these products such as UI components or modules, model projects and prototypes, and other various tools. The UI ITSC's website www.itsc.org serves as a portal for states to access products and resources.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

SDDS and OccuCoder Updates

In October, UI ITSC released a major update to the SUTA Dumping Detection System (SDDS) with version 4.0. This latest version incorporated technical upgrades and enhancements requested by state users. Some enhancements included: enhanced filter search, context sensitive help, export-to-Excel capability, benefit charges query, and more.

In November, UI ITSC released an update to OccuCoder with version 2.8. The latest version included: updates the O*NET database to version 24, an optional conversion of results to 2018 SOC (Standard Occupation Classification) codes, improved spell checker, technical updates, bug fixes, and more.

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

Workforce Connect

On January 28, 2020, the New Hampshire Employment Security Commission (NHES) implemented the Workforce Connect (WFC) Framework with their Unemployment Insurance and Vocational Rehabilitation programs. As part of the implementation NHES was able to connect their Geographic Solutions job match system and NH UI platform to the framework. WFC was established to identify and develop new ways for UI Claimants to bridge the path from "unemployed" to "reemployed," addressing common issues and challenges.

UI ITSC and three pilot states created a suite of tools to assist states like New Hampshire with implementation of the framework to bridge the gap to reemployment. This framework currently consists of three components:

- ▶ A single sign on (SSO) tool: States can use SSO across the key workforce programs.
- ▶ An integrated common registration component which acts as the front end to the state's workforce programs.
- ▶ An integrated customer profile containing consolidated information from workforce programs presented to the customer in a personalized online tool.

These three components are the framework for the "Workforce Connect" software suite, which is available to all State Workforce Agencies by UI ITSC.

UI ITSC is currently working with MT, MA, and CT on implementation of WFC. However, due to COVID-19, the timelines of these efforts have been impacted.

UI Program Peer Review System

On a yearly basis USDOL works with states on conducting annual, biennial, and triennial reviews of certain program areas within state UI agencies. USDOL and UI ITSC have built a paperless process using an electronic Document Management System. This will allow paperless peer reviews of Benefits Accuracy Measurement (BAM), Benefit Timeliness and Quality (BTQ), and Appeals.

The cloud based solution allows states to upload all required documents in a secure manner. The solution allows task assignment based on user role, and workflows route documents through the different stages of review.

A successful pilot of the Appeals workflow was conducted with USDOL and partner states in December 2019, and the BAM workflow has been completed and is ready for pilot when USDOL resumes the peer review process. The system is designed to allow for the addition of other peer review workflows.

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.

Visit www.itsc.org for more information.



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.



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.



SUTA DETECTION (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.



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.



WORKFORCE CONNECT

A software suite of tools that helps states implement WIOA by connecting partners and providing a seamless experience for jobseekers when accessing services.

Benefits of Workforce Connect

- Aligns and connects the IT systems and data of WIOA programs to ensure integrated services.
- Improves coordination of services among WIOA partners.
- Supports high-quality and streamlined services provided to the jobseeker.

EDUCATION & TRAINING

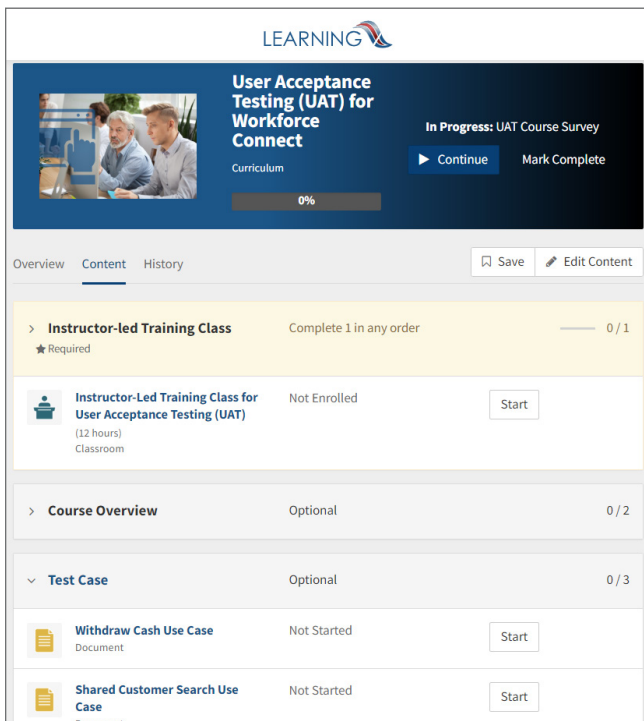
The UI ITSC develops educational materials and training programs for state UI Agencies focused on UI IT systems and processes. In addition, the UI ITSC provides training and education to the vendor community on the UI program to expand and improve the UI IT Modernization vendor community.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Virtual Training - UAT Training

In April, UI ITSC held an online virtual training on User Acceptance Testing (UAT) focused on testing and implementation of Workforce Connect for staff from Montana. This training, like many of UI ITSC modernization training, is usually conducted in person at state facilities. Because of the current pandemic, UI ITSC modified this training into a virtual format. Currently, the UI ITSC training team is exploring additional options to conduct more instructor-led training virtually.

In August, UI ITSC conducted an online virtual training for Massachusetts as part of an ongoing project to implement Workforce Connect. UI ITSC trained state staff in UAT with specific examples from Workforce Connect to prepare the staff in testing the framework.

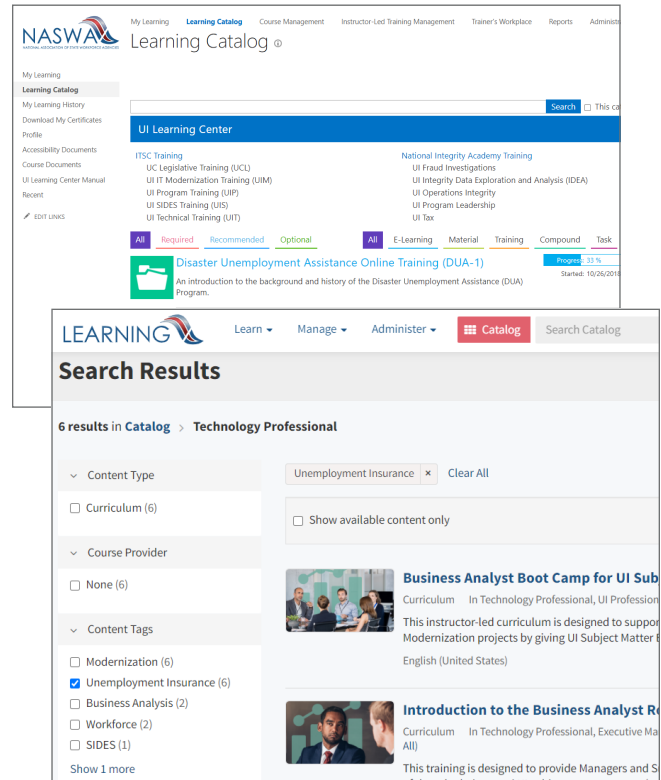


PROJECT HIGHLIGHT

Learning System Transition to NASWA Learning

Last year, UI ITSC and the UI Integrity Center began an effort to update the Learning Management System managed by UI ITSC since 2013. Over the years, the training needs of NASWA has grown and expanded to include training content from UI SIDES, UI ICON, Workforce ITSC, and more.

On May 18, 2020, UI ITSC transitioned the "UI Learning Center" to the new Learning System. In addition to the new system, NASWA consolidated all learning developed across NASWA under "NASWA Learning." All training developed by the UI ITSC including modernization and UI program training are now available on the new learning system. Access the new learning system at www.naswa.org/learning.

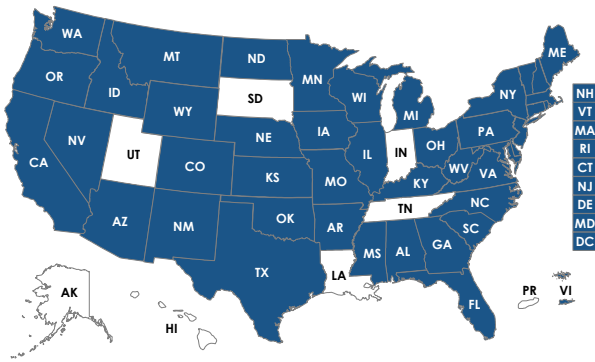


Supporting States during COVID-19

Advisory Support

Like many others, the activities of UI ITSC working with state UI agencies were impacted due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As many states shifted priorities from modernization projects to manage the pandemic, UI ITSC did the same. UI ITSC continued to assist states with ongoing modernization projects but at the same time provide advisory and technical services to manage new programs enacted from the CARES Act.

UI ITSC assisted states in identifying and troubleshooting alternate tools and mechanisms to handle increased workload such as chatbots, AI services, etc. Also, with the CARES Act programs, UI ITSC worked with states in planning, support, and implementation of IT solutions to support these programs while ensuring that the solutions conform with broader UI IT Modernization strategies and initiatives. UI ITSC assisted 45 states during the pandemic, see below.



UI ITSC Steering Committee meeting held virtually on June 18 and 24, 2020.



Training and Education

DUA to PUA Training

UI ITSC worked with the UI Integrity Center in converting existing Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA) lessons into training for the new Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) program. The DUA lessons were developed by UI ITSC and USDOL in 2019. Since PUA was modeled from DUA, the UI Integrity Center and USDOL were given the source files of the DUA lessons to modify it with PUA specific changes.

Training for New Temporary State Staff

In the midst of transition to a new Learning Management System, the UI Integrity Center and UI ITSC received a wave of requests to provide training resources to temporary state staff hired to support states with the increased volume of claims. UI ITSC and UI Integrity Center worked to provide relevant training to over 3,000 state temporary staff to assist states with claims. Online training included an overview of UI agency functions, fact-finding and adjudication lessons, customer service, handling UI appeals, and more.

CONTACT

Ben Peirce, UI ITSC Director
bpeirce@naswa.org | 202.434.8016

For more information on UI ITSC
visit www.itsc.org

National Association of State Workforce Agencies
444 North Capitol Street, N.W., Suite 300
Washington, D.C. 20001
(P) 202.434.8020 | www.naswa.org