Unemployment Insurance

Equitable Access Toolkit

WHAT IS THE EQUITABLE ACCESS TOOLKIT?

Let's explore the Equitable Access Headquarters. Below, you can explore information on its background, purpose, audience, and intended use cases. Designed as a visual experience, you will discover how and why the Toolkit is presented as the virtual Equitable Access Headquarters, including why you are currently in a lobby. For more information on the term equitable access, please reference UIPL No. 02-16, UIPL No. 02-16 Change 1, and UIPL No. 11-14.

THE BACKGROUND

In 2021, in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, the U.S. Department of Labor launched its "Tiger Team" initiative. As outlined in unemployment Insurance program Letter (UIPL) No. 02-22, the initiative's goals are to help state unemployment insurance (UI) agencies in:

1) promoting equitable access;
2) preventing and detecting fraud and recovering fraudulently paid funds;
3) ensuring the timely payment of benefits as well as engaging in activities to reduce workload backlogs.

Findings from the UIPL No. 02-22 Tiger Team initiative revealed that many states have similar challenges when it comes to promoting equitable access to their UI programs. In response, the Department of Labor developed this Equitable Access Toolkit to present common recommendations, leading practices, and insights. The purpose of the Toolkit is to present these shared findings to state UI agencies in a visual and accessible format and to guide them in taking actions to improve equitable access.

THE PURPOSE

Compiled from the leading practices observed and recommended across states participating in the UIPL No. 02-22 Tiger Team initiative, the Equitable Access Toolkit is comprised of key topics—each a critical component of an equitable and accessible UI program. All states are required to comply with applicable federal equal opportunity law, including Section 188 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and its implementing regulations at 29 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) part 38. Adoption of the suggestions in this Toolkit does not guarantee compliance with non-discrimination obligations.

THE CONCEPT

Topics in this Toolkit are represented visually as different floors of an agency office building. Each topic is given a page, front and back:

1. The front page introduces the topic, highlights potential impacts of addressing the topic, and portrays a visual scene that introduces high-level recommended actionable steps.

2. The back page provides further details on the action steps presented on the front page with step-by-step activities and their associated tools, resources, and recommended stakeholders.

Please note: the action steps and recommendations within this Toolkit are to be used as a guide. Not all steps may be applicable to each state UI agency depending on relevant state laws, statutes, regulations, or guidance as well as existing processes or policies. However, state UI agencies should be able to utilize relevant parts of this Toolkit to promote practices applicable to their programs and activities.

WHO IS THE TOOLKIT FOR?

Now that you have a firm understanding of what the Equitable Access Toolkit is, let's explore who the Toolkit is targeted for. The intent of the Toolkit is to have a broad reach for all UI stakeholders, including claimant advocacy groups, but the project ideas were designed for UI state agencies to be able to leverage in their current systems. Below you will find descriptions of users specifically targeted for the Equitable Access Toolkit. In addition, you will find a list of recommended opportunities and actions the user can take while utilizing the Toolkit.

THE USERS

STATE UI AGENCIES

May use this Toolkit as a resource that can provide clarity into the actions and processes helpful in developing a more equitable and accessible UI program.

STATE UI EQUITABLE ACCESS LEADS

Housed within State UI Agencies, persons responsible for equitable access may use this Toolkit as a roadmap to learn about strategies, opportunities, and initiatives to advance the development of more equitable and accessible UI programs and services.

STATE EQUAL OPPORTUNITY OFFICER

Required by 29 CFR part 38 to monitor compliance with nondiscrimination laws, State Equal Opportunity Officers may use this Toolkit in collaboration with State UI Equitable Access Leads to ensure that actions intended to improve equity and accessibility are consistent with legal requirements.

CLAIMANT ADVOCACY GROUPS (CAGS)

Claimant advocacy groups (CAGs) can play a critical role within state UI agencies. The Equitable Access Toolkit can be used to identify potential partnership opportunities.

OPPORTUNITIES TO UTILIZE THE EQUITABLE ACCESS TOOLKIT

The Equitable Access Toolkit can be utilized by the targeted users to undertake several efforts, including:

- Developing a proactive equitable access strategy
- Aligning priorities and goals
- Enacting new initiatives
- Conducting a review and analysis of current processes
- Developing a scope of work
- Enhancing standard operating procedures (SOPs)
- Promoting equitable access

THE LOBBY

Welcome to the Lobby of the Equitable Access Headquarters—your introduction to the Toolkit which will guide your agency in reviewing, navigating, and utilizing each of the ten equitable access topics featured throughout this document. Below you will see the Lobby, visualizing key resources that will help you understand the significance and use cases of the Equitable Access Headquarters.

WHAT'S IN THE LOBBY?

Welcome to the Lobby! Over the next few pages, you will receive an introduction to the Equitable Access Toolkit, detailed in the following sections:

- What is the Equitable Access Toolkit?
- Who is the Toolkit for?
- Table of Contents
- How do I use the Toolkit?

NEED TO CONNECT?

Please direct inquiries and feedback to the appropriate Employment and Training Administration (ETA) Regional Office.

VISUAL REFERENCES WITHIN THE LOBBY

RECEPTION DESK

Discover the concept, purpose, and theme of the Equitable Access Toolkit.

ENTRANCE

Understand who the Toolkit is designed for and how it can be used.

FLOOR DIRECTORY

Navigate the Toolkit topics (floors) using the table of contents.

KIOSK

Learn how to navigate the content and visuals for each topic (floor).

CONCIERGE DESK

Discover your help desk for the Toolkit, allowing you to connect with U.S. DOL.
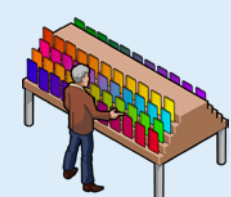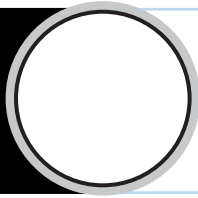

BROCHURE HOLDER

Explore additional content for each topic (floor) by visiting the appendix.
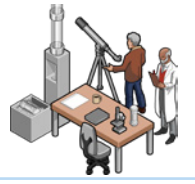
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Welcome to the "Floor Directory" – aka the Table of Contents. Below, you will find a title and description for each of the ten topics (floors) covered within the Equitable Access Toolkit. We recommend reviewing each topic and "selecting" the topics (floors) that you are interested in "visiting." Once you are ready to explore, click on the topic (floor) title and be automatically redirected to the floor via our "virtual elevator." It is not required to go through the topics in order.

NEED HELP OR WANT TO CONNECT?

Please direct inquiries and feedback to the appropriate Employment and Training Administration (ETA) Regional Office.

HOW DO I USE THE TOOLKIT?

Now it's time to learn how to navigate the Toolkit topics (floors). Each topic is covered over two pages. The first page provides an overview of the topic, including a description, potential impacts, and the presentation of the topic in a visual format. The second page gets into the details – including a step-by-step guide to the initiative and stakeholders, tools, and resources you will need to proceed. Review this page before proceeding to the Toolkit topics (floors).

DESCRIPTION

Discover a detailed description to frame the topic and position its relevance within the Equitable Access Toolkit. Use the description to become familiar with the topic, identify applicable UIPLs, and discover the value of each topic in promoting equitable access.

POTENTIAL IMPACTS

The Potential Impacts can be found on the front page of each Equitable Access Toolkit topic. They are represented by an icon, title, and description. Use these impact statements to discover how your UI agency can benefit by enacting that particular Toolkit topic.

OVERALL SCENE

The Overall Scene provides a visual representation of the topic as it would play out in an office setting, complete with individual scenes for each step of the project. Use the overall scene to visualize and interpret the initiative as you prepare to explore each step of the process.

VISUAL REFERENCES

Within each overall scene, there are several visual cues to reinforce themes and components, including the interconnectivity between topics (floors) and laws and regulations. Use this section to discover the meaning behind each visual cue.

TOOLS & RESOURCES

The Tools and Resources represent the items necessary to complete the process for each topic, including the hardware, software, and specific data sources by referencing the icon library. Use this component to align the tools you need to complete the initiative.

STAKEHOLDERS

The Stakeholders represent the people or organizations necessary to complete the process for each topic, including UI agency staff and external vendors, referenced by the icon library. Use this component to align the stakeholders required to complete the initiative.

STEP-BY-STEP CONTENT

Each topic is broken down into steps, containing specific content and instructions to complete each step, detailed as purpose, research, and action statements. Use this content to identify the objective, required prep work, and action that must take place for each step.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

At the conclusion of each step, there may be a blue box containing italicized text, representing a key takeaway, reference, or consideration. Use this component to reinforce or assist in completing the action for the particular step in the process.

THE FLOORS

EQUITABLE ACCESS DATA & METRICS

Data collection and analysis is a key component of establishing an equitable and accessible UI program; it allows state UI agencies to better understand access gaps for different populations participating in the UI claims process and determine ways to address them. Additionally, 29 CFR 38.41(b)(2) regulates that state UI agencies must record the race/ethnicity, sex, age, limited English proficiency, preferred, language, and disability status (where known), of every applicant, registrant, participant, and terminee, as those terms are defined in 29 CFR 38.4. Results will be driven by improved decision making and more effective methods for improving equity and accessibility through better gap identification, root cause analysis, and solutioning. This guide will assist state UI agencies in developing consistent protocols to collect, analyze, and utilize data to identify equitable access gaps and develop action plans to close them.

POTENTIAL IMPACTS

Identify Claimant Barriers
Use data to uncover barriers to equitable access along the claimant journey. Identify underserved communities and disparities impacting equity across the UI claims process.

Increase Recipiency Rates
Use metrics to identify and close equity and accessibility gaps resulting in more claimants served.

Measure Impact
Provide the ability to measure the impact of equitable access initiatives on members of protected groups, as well as underserved communities and persons.

Build Up Trust
Promote greater transparency and improved trust in UI agencies for UI claimants, employers, community groups, and members of the public.
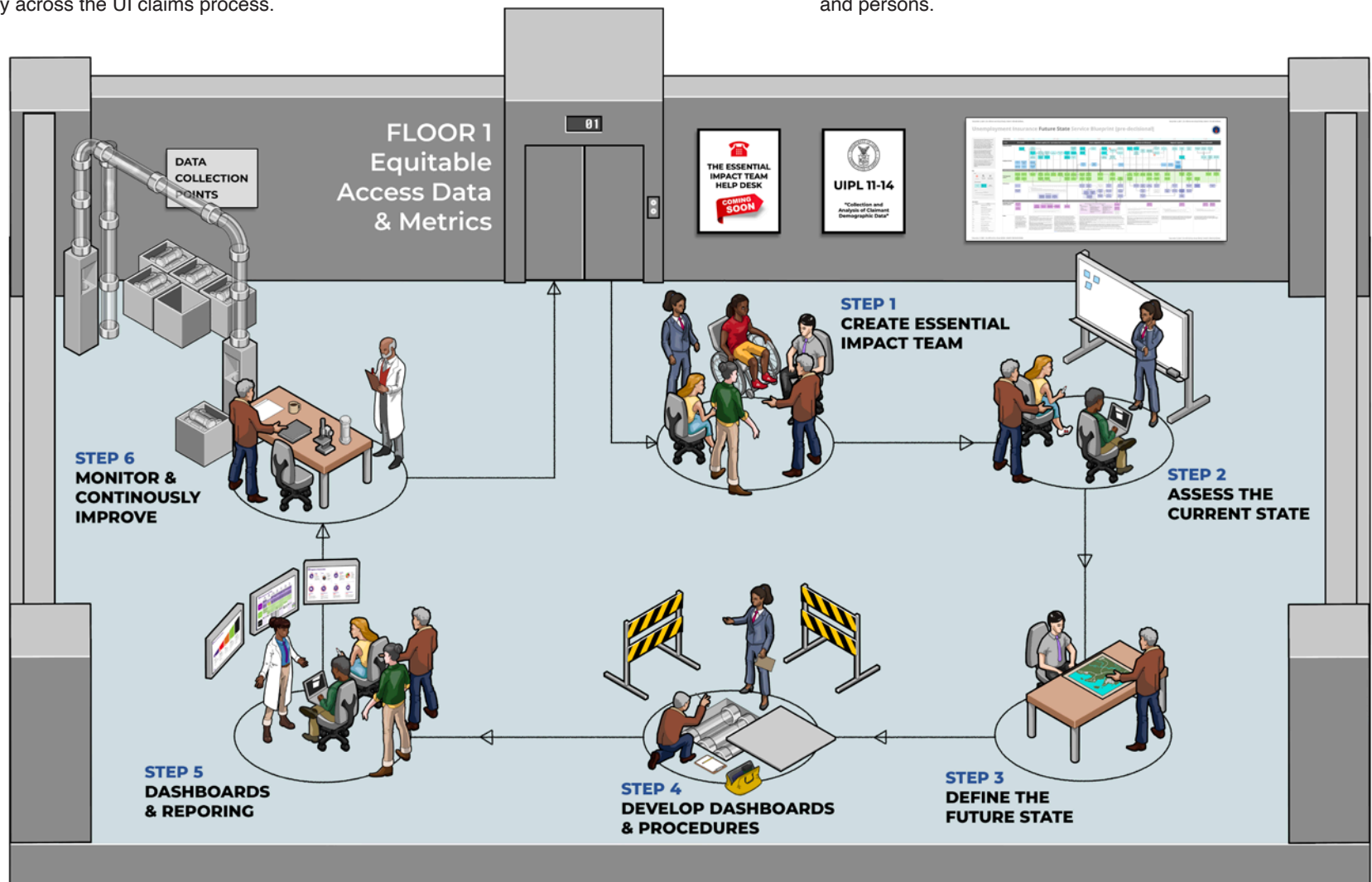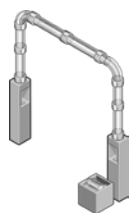
FLOOR 1
Equitable Access Data & Metrics

01

THE ESSENTIAL IMPACT TEAM HELP DESK — COMING SOON

UIPL 11-14 — "Collection and Analysis of Claimant Demographic Data"

DATA COLLECTION POINTS

STEP 1 CREATE ESSENTIAL IMPACT TEAM

STEP 2 ASSESS THE CURRENT STATE

STEP 3 DEFINE THE FUTURE STATE

STEP 4 DEVELOP DASHBOARDS & PROCEDURES

STEP 5 DASHBOARDS & REPORING

STEP 6 MONITOR & CONTINOUSLY IMPROVE

VISUAL REFERENCES

THE TUBE SYSTEM
The tube system represents the interconnectivity between floors and how data should flow between them.

DATA COLLECTION TUBES
The data tubes reflect how data from other topics flows to this floor to leverage the EIT and process.

EIT HELP DESK
This poster previews an EIT help desk that will be placed on other floors, to provide oversight.
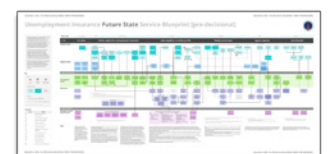
SERVICE BLUEPRINT
The blueprint represents a process to map key claimant interaction and data collection points.

EQUITABLE ACCESS DATA & METRICS

These steps for implementing equitable access data collection and metrics processes within a UI agency are to be used as a guide to establish promising practices. Not all steps may be applicable to each state UI agency depending on existing processes or policies. For more guidance on data collection and state responsibilities for ensuring access to unemployment insurance benefits, please reference 29 CFR part 38, UIPL No. 11-14, UIPL No. 02-16, and UIPL No. 02-16, Change 1.

TOOLS & RESOURCES

Equitable Access Metrics · Sample Artifacts · Sample SOPs · Sample Visuals · Data Collection Tool · Business Intelligence Tool · Behavioral Insights Toolkit

STAKEHOLDERS

IT/Online Lead · Comms Director · LMI Team · Legal Team · Call Center Lead · Equity Lead · UI Program Director · Essential Impact Team · Third Party Vendor · Equal Opportunity (EO) Officer

FLOOR 1 — Equitable Access Data & Metrics

STEP 1 CREATE ESSENTIAL IMPACT TEAM · STEP 2 ASSESS THE CURRENT STATE · STEP 3 DEFINE THE FUTURE STATE · STEP 4 DEVELOP DASHBOARDS & PROCEDURES · STEP 5 DASHBOARDS & REPORTING · STEP 6 MONITOR & CONTINUOUSLY IMPROVE
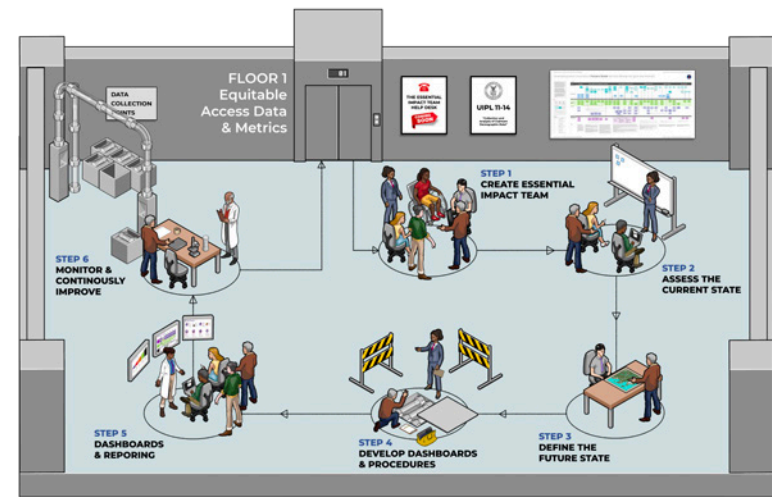
STEPS IN DEPTH

STEP 1
CREATE ESSENTIAL IMPACT TEAM (EIT)

Purpose: Create a cross-functional leadership team to oversee the project and lead ongoing review and continuous improvement efforts.

Research: Identify internal and cross-functional UI agency staff with the capacity to collaborate and lead equitable access metrics improvement initiatives. Recommended roles include IT, Communications, Labor Market Information (LMI) Team, Legal, Contact Center Operations, Equal Opportunity Officer, and Equity Lead. This EIT should identify a project manager and solidify the active support of executive sponsors and senior leadership.

Action: Establish an EIT consisting of 5-7 cross-functional merit staff to lead data collection, usage, and continuous improvements. Following the establishment of the UI agency metrics capabilities, this cross-functional EIT group will continue to meet on a quarterly basis to lead metric review sessions and collaborate on continuous improvement activities to close equitable access gaps identified.

Consideration: *Standing up an EIT is crucial to addressing other topics of the Equitable Access Toolkit.*

STEP 2
ASSESS THE CURRENT STATE

Purpose: Develop a snapshot of the current state of equitable access data collection across the UI agency.

Research: Establish a baseline understanding of the current processes used to capture claimant demographic and user experience data. This includes what, when, and how the data is collected, stored, and used across the claims journey and the state UI agency.

Action: Develop necessary artifacts to document the current state and identify system and capability gaps.[1] Recommended artifacts include:

- A metrics list containing desired key performance indicators (KPIs)
- Process flows to document when in the claims process equitable access KPIs are collected
- System architecture diagrams to identify where data is collected and stored

Reference: *For example, a process flow could reveal if critical KPIs are not captured prior to ID verification.*

STEP 3
DEFINE THE FUTURE STATE

Purpose: Define the ideal future state of equitable access data collection, analysis, and continuous improvement within the UI agency.

Research: Identify key "moments that matter" along the claimant lifecycle for measuring critical equity data points and to adjust and create new data collection points and "listening posts." This includes moving the collection of race/ethnicity data prior to ID verification.[2] Research UI equitable access metrics and Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) leading practices.

Action: Define and align on dashboard KPIs - definitions, calculations, and assumptions. Create mock-ups of potential strategic views and KPI dashboards. Create a future-state blueprint that identifies the ideal process, including what, where, and when the agency can interact and collect key claimant data points, to establish equity and user experience KPIs. This includes identifying additional data needs and new interaction points along the claims journey. Define new SOPs for data collection, review, and continuous improvement.

Consideration: *It is recommended that UI agencies have both public and internal dashboards without PII, along with internal, function-specific views.*

STEP 4
DEVELOP DASHBOARDS & PROCEDURES

Purpose: Identify the current process gaps and develop a course-correction strategy. Develop SOPs for the quarterly metric reviews and continuous improvement activities.

Research: Compare the current-state blueprint to the future-state blueprint completed in step 3 – to identify the gaps in data collection, interaction points, and processes to establish scope of work.

Action: Establish new data points at key interaction points along the claims journey. Build upon existing technical infrastructure enabling the creation of prioritized dashboards, strategic views, and reports. Visualize data to include in quarterly reports provided to the EIT, allowing for the opportunity to continuously measure and create action plans to improve the overall claimant experience. Train functional teams on handling data and new SOPs for the "check, measure, act" continuous improvement approach.

Takeaway: *Repeat this process after each meeting, revisiting step 4 to align new metrics if needed.*

STEP 5
PILOT AND LAUNCH

Purpose: Roll out new metrics capabilities. Host your first quarterly equitable access metrics review. Identify gaps and prioritize opportunities.

Action: Roll out new metrics capabilities.

Train UI staff on utilizing analytical and visualization tools to create reports that can inform the EIT of challenges and opportunities to improve the claimant experience. UI staff to assume ownership of tabulating and visualizing data in dashboards.[3]

The EIT will hold its first quarterly equitable access metrics review session. Identify equitable access gaps and disparities, conduct root cause analysis. Identify potential opportunities and create a prioritized roadmap for improvement. Collaborate cross-functionally to drive improvements.

Takeaway: *Hosting your first equitable access metrics review session is a pivotal first step for driving long-lasting impacts.*
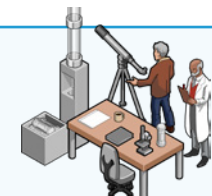
STEP 6
MONITOR & CONTINUOUSLY IMPROVE

Purpose: Develop standard process to actively check, measure, and act upon equitable access findings.

Action: The EIT collaborates regularly to actively monitor and review equitable access metrics. The EIT leads "check, measure, act" methodology.

The EIT will create action plans in collaboration with stakeholders, including agency staff and claimant advocacy organizations that interact with targeted claimant groups.

Action plans generated through this process can be implemented into pilot improvement projects.

Takeaway: *Collecting and analyzing equitable access metrics is important, but taking action against opportunities is what leads to results.*

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Claimant advocacy groups (CAGs) are beneficial resources for UI agencies as they seek to create a more equitable and accessible UI program. Additionally, 29 CFR 38.40 requires that state UI agencies conduct affirmative outreach to ensure that they are providing equal access to members of various groups protected by law. UI agencies can partner with CAGs to recruit diverse voices for user testing, improve communication channels within communities, develop education outreach efforts to inform claimants, and host roundtable discussions to identify claimant barriers. This partnership can take the form of a community organization council (COC). This guide informs UI agencies on how to utilize the Essential Impact Team (EIT) to create a COC for the purpose of engaging CAGs to identify and eliminate claimant barriers through roundtable discussions and collaborative solutioning.

POTENTIAL IMPACTS

Collaborative Partnerships

CAGs and UI agencies can work together to conduct community outreach events and develop education materials to better position the claimants for success.

Build Up Trust

By working with CAGs, UI agencies can build up trust within communities and with claimants.

Identify Claimant Barriers

CAGs work directly with claimants and members of the public from historically underserved communities, which can provide agencies with key insights into pain points.
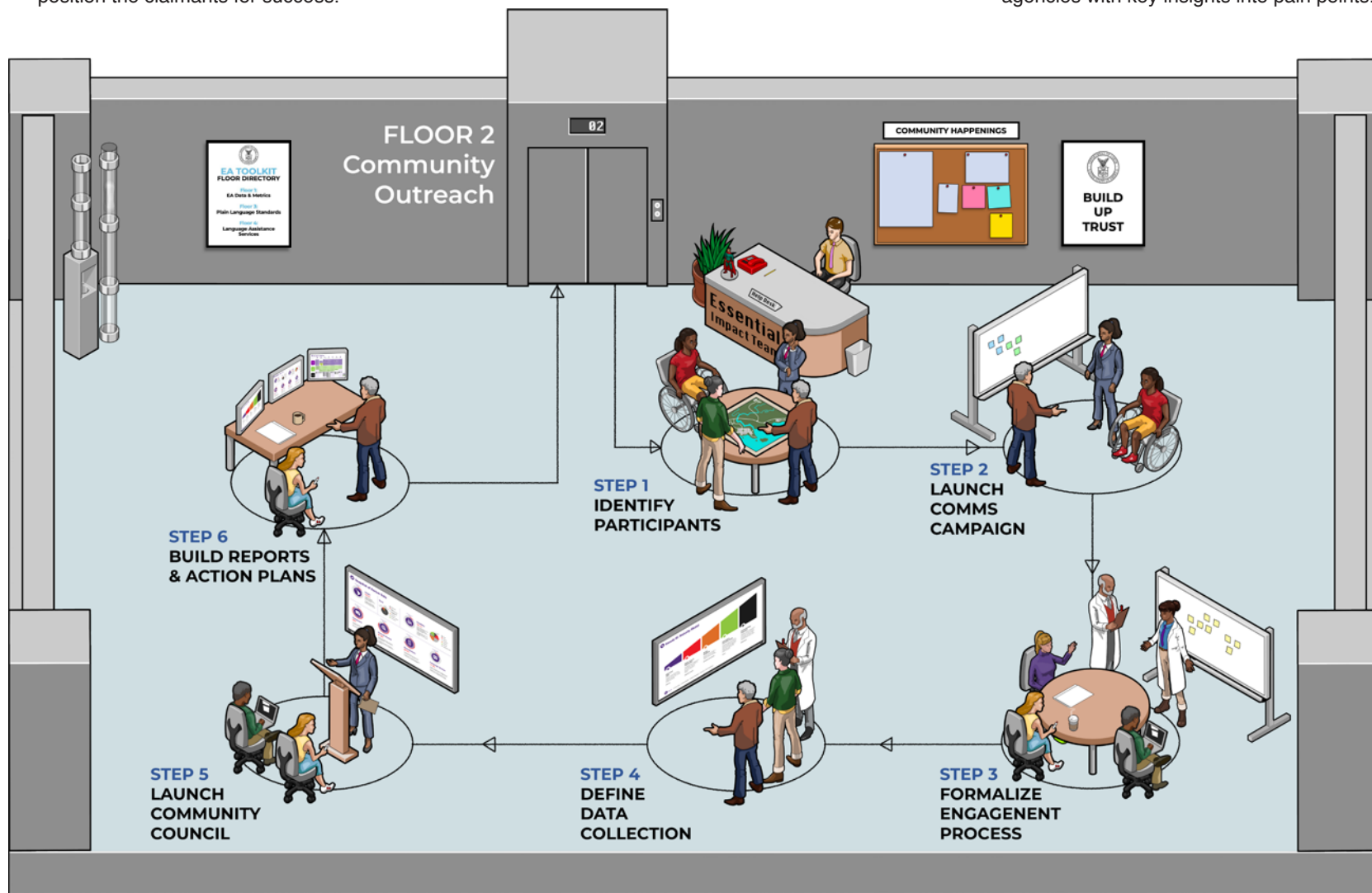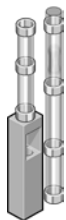
FLOOR 2 Community Outreach

STEP 1 IDENTIFY PARTICIPANTS

STEP 2 LAUNCH COMMS CAMPAIGN

STEP 3 FORMALIZE ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

STEP 4 DEFINE DATA COLLECTION

STEP 5 LAUNCH COMMUNITY COUNCIL

STEP 6 BUILD REPORTS & ACTION PLANS

VISUAL REFERENCES

THE TUBE SYSTEM

The tube system represents the interconnectivity between floors and how data should flow between them.

TRUST POSTER

The poster on the wall is to reinforce how this initiative can help build up trust between UI agencies and communities.

EIT HELP DESK

The newly formed EIT Help Desk visually represents how this team provides critical oversite and assistance on this floor.

BULLETIN BOARD

The bulletin board is a visual cue for the user to understand the importance of being aware of activities in the community.

PROCEED TO THE STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

Are you ready to discover the steps necessary to enact this topic? Click on the arrow located on the right to proceed to the step-by-step guide for this topic.

RETURN TO THE LOBBY

Interested in traveling to another floor? Use our "virtual elevator" to navigate the document. Click on the arrow located on the right to return to the lobby and floor directory.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

These steps for establishing community outreach efforts are to be used as a guide to enact promising practices. Depending on existing processes or policies, not all steps may be applicable to each state UI agency. For more guidance on community outreach, please reference the recommendations put forth by the U.S. Department of Labor.

TOOLS & RESOURCES

- ETA 203 Reports
- Census Data
- Translation Services
- Spreadsheet Software
- Business Intelligence Tool
- Data Collection Tool
- Behavioral Insights Toolkit

STAKEHOLDERS

- IT/Online Lead
- Comms Director
- Equity Lead
- Essential Impact Team
- UI Program Director
- Data Analyst
- Claimant Advocacy Groups (CAGs)
- Equal Opportunity (EO) Officer

STEPS IN DEPTH

STEP 1
IDENTIFY PARTICIPANTS

Purpose: Identify claimant advocacy groups (CAGs) to participate in community council.[4]

Research: Reference internal and external data to identify Underserved communities and CAGs within the state. Underserved Communities refer to populations and geographic communities that have been systematically denied an opportunity to participate in aspects of economic, social, and civic life.[5] CAGs are defined as community organizations that provide free or low-cost assistance or representation for UI claimants.

Action: Create a list of underserved and marginalized communities in your state, using American Community Survey Data (DP02 and DP05) and ETA 203 Reports.[6] Within these communities, identify existing CAGs already assisting claimants and other members of the public. Merge those entities into a list with any existing CAG partnerships to formulate your recruitment list for outreach.

Reference: *29 CFR part 38, including sections 38.9, 38.15, and 38.40; and Executive Order 13985 for more information on underserved communities.*

STEP 2
LAUNCH COMMS CAMPAIGN

Purpose: Create and launch strategy to engage targeted CAGs for participation in community council.

Research: Collaborate with the UI communications team to create and launch a campaign strategy to convey the agency's intent to form a community council and how CAGs can join. The strategy should include the intent and purpose of the council. States can reference successful community vaccine campaigns during the pandemic and the guide posted by the American Psychological Association, although it was developed for a different purpose and may not be fully applicable to the UI context. LINK

Action: Create a multimedia campaign to educate CAGs on the opportunity to join the community council. The collateral should be translated in multiple languages and include the mission and purpose of the council, along with how CAGs can elect to participate.[7]

Consideration: *The formation of a COC needs to be in accordance with state laws and regulations.*

STEP 3
FORMALIZE ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

Purpose: Develop standard operating procedures (SOPs) and an engagement process for the community council, including purpose and meeting structure.

Research: Create the parameters of the council, including the meeting structure. Items to consider include (1) what - the purpose of the meetings with clear outcomes; (2) where - online, in-person, or both; (3) when - set monthly or quarterly dates; (4) how - consistent agenda and designed activities. Quarterly meetings are recommended.

Action: Led by the EIT, work with the Communications team to design meeting collateral, including information on the purpose and expectations of the council and agendas, and work with IT to design an online environment if necessary. Agendas should be translated into appropriate languages and provided in alternate formats; they should clearly and concisely state how the agency and CAGs will engage. Agendas and meeting invites should be delivered at least four weeks in advance.

Consideration: *Create a webpage for the COC, ensuring the site is translated into appropriate languages and accessible to individuals with disabilities.*

STEP 4
DEFINE DATA COLLECTION

Purpose: Define the metrics and insights that should be collected in partnership with the COC.

Research: A main purpose of the community council is to capture key insights around pain points for claimants and community members. Consider developing a spreadsheet to capture and track pain points across the UI journey—include potential solutions, as they are discussed. Also, consider designing metrics for all initiatives created by the council to track participation and impact. No confidential UC information, including PII, should be included in any data sharing with CAGs.

Action: Capture baseline information each meeting, including the CAGs participating and the communities they represent. Utilize the data team to create a spreadsheet to capture and track claimant challenges and solutions discussed during meetings. Any initiative created or launched from the council should include specific data points to capture to determine the project's impact.

Reference: *Utilize the demographic and user data sets in Floor #1 (Equitable Access Data & Metrics).*

STEP 5
LAUNCH COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Purpose: Launch the COC and collaborative efforts between the agency and CAGs.

Research: Reference the meeting structure (step 3), to conduct the sessions. The meetings should be led by the EIT and include listening sessions to capture claimant pain points and collaborative sessions to identify solutions. Have the Data team present to capture predetermined data points established in step 4.

Action: The meetings should be opened by the UI Director, with the EIT leading listening and collaborative sessions and recapping any previous meetings (when applicable).[8] Capture key insights and drive towards solutions from the partnership, including opportunities to create collaborative education outreach events and process improvements. All solutions should be captured and presented to leadership for review.

Reference: *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guide on how to conduct community brainstorming sessions (LINK).*

STEP 6
BUILD REPORTS & ACTION PLANS

Purpose: Generate overall reports and enact action plans aligned to solutions.

Research: The insights captured during council meetings should be presented to UI leadership and the EIT in visual formats on a regular basis for review. Consider creating partnerships with CAGs, in accordance with and as permitted under state laws and regulations, to enact identified solutions, including outreach events.

Action: Create regular reports complete with data and metrics identified in step 4. All proposed solutions and applicable metrics should be presented to leadership for review. If approved, assign appropriate UI staff and formalize a partnership with CAGs to launch the initiative. Have the legal team review if a memorandum of understanding (MOU) is required.

Takeaway: *Repeat this process after each meeting, revisiting Step 4 - Define Data Collection to align new metrics if needed.*

PLAIN LANGUAGE STANDARDS

Materials that are poorly written or full of jargon can pose big challenges to the reader, especially for underserved groups such as those with low English literacy, limited English proficiency, or disabilities. Simplifying communications with plain language could mitigate these barriers to access and improve participation and recipiency rates. Plain language helps the audience find what they need, understand what they find, and use what they find to meet their needs. It reduces friction. From the agency's operational standpoint, clearer instructions might reduce questions from claimants and the general public and errors on forms, lessening the burden on contact center staff, adjudicators, and investigators, ultimately leading to improvements in operational metrics such as call volume, timeliness, and improper payment rate.

POTENTIAL IMPACTS

Reduce Errors

With simplified communications, claimants and members of the public will better understand what is expected of them and how to navigate the process.

Increase Recipiency Rates

If claimants can better understand the process, they will be less intimidated, more likely to apply, and less likely to get stuck or abandon.

Improve Customer Experience

If claimants better understand the instructions and UI claims process, they will have a more seamless and intuitive experience.

Improve Timeliness & Accuracy

If claimants better understand the instructions, they can avoid accidental misreporting. This can reduce case load and mitigate avoidable back and forth for adjudicators.
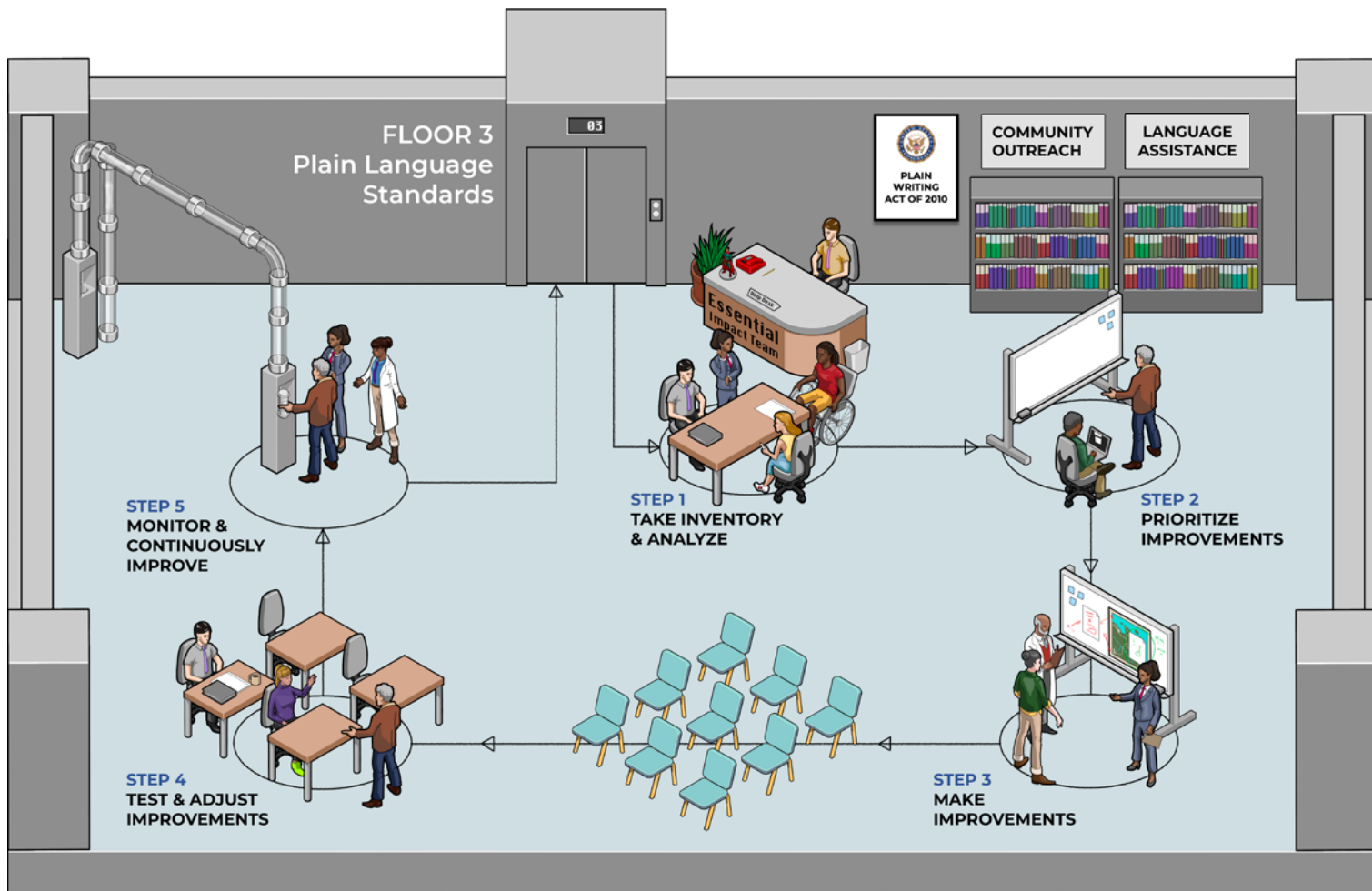
FLOOR 3
Plain Language Standards

03

PLAIN WRITING ACT OF 2010

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE

Essential Impact Team

STEP 5
MONITOR & CONTINUOUSLY IMPROVE

STEP 1
TAKE INVENTORY & ANALYZE

STEP 2
PRIORITIZE IMPROVEMENTS

STEP 4
TEST & ADJUST IMPROVEMENTS

STEP 3
MAKE IMPROVEMENTS

VISUAL REFERENCES

THE TUBE SYSTEM

The tube system represents the interconnectivity between floors and how data should flow between them.
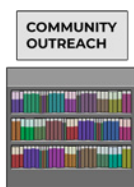
COMMUNITY BOOKCASE

Represents how insights captured from Community Outreach can help inform the shape of the Plain Language Initiative.

PLAIN WRITING ACT

The Plain Writing Act of 2010 requires federal agencies to use plain language when communicating with the public.

LANGUAGE BOOKCASE

Represents how Plain Language Standards and Language Assistance Service (floors) improvements are intertwined.

PROCEED TO THE STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

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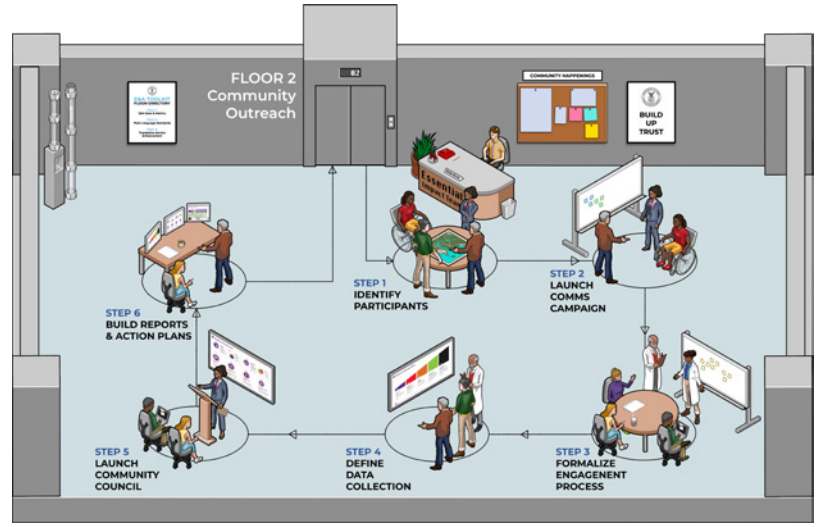
PLAIN LANGUAGE STANDARDS

These steps for enacting plain language standards are to be used as a guide to enact promising practices. Not all steps may be applicable to each state UI agency depending on existing processes or policies. For more guidance on plain language standards, please reference plainlanguage.gov and the NASWA toolkit.

TOOLS & RESOURCES

Spreadsheet Software | NASWA Toolkit | Interviews | A/B Testing | Focus Groups | Plainlanguage.gov

STAKEHOLDERS

Equity Lead | Comms Director | Essential Impact Team (EIT) | Legal Team | IT/Online Lead | Call Center Lead | Adjudicators | BAM Team | User Experience Specialist | Equal Opportunity (EO) Officer

FLOOR 3 Plain Language Standards

STEP 5 MONITOR & CONTINUOUSLY IMPROVE • STEP 1 TAKE INVENTORY & ANALYZE • STEP 2 PRIORITIZE IMPROVEMENTS • STEP 4 TEST & ADJUST IMPROVEMENTS • STEP 3 MAKE IMPROVEMENTS

STEPS IN DEPTH

STEP 1
TAKE INVENTORY & ANALYZE

Purpose: Create a list of all standardized communications to customers (claimants and employers) such as claimant handbooks, standard mailings, website content, form instructions, and FAQs.[9] Take care to redact any PII when gathering these materials.

Research: Take inventory of all standardized customer-facing communications—both print and online—such as claimant handbooks, standard mailings, website content, form instructions, and FAQs. Tag or index by keywords and map any dependencies. For example, all communications that mention "waiting week" could be tagged with that keyword to allow for a holistic view of the topic. If making a change to the "waiting week" definition, the agency could also use these mappings to ensure that all instances are updated.

Action: Collect and analyze data to identify which communications are problematic. The team can speak to frontline staff who will know the most frequently asked questions claimants have. The EIT can interview and test identified communications with users to validate staff's observations and fill in gaps. They can also use contact center data on claimants' primary reasons for calling (if available) to support staff's observations with quantitative data. Similarly, the team should consult with other units such as Adjudication, Appeals, Benefits Timeliness & Quality, and Benefits Accuracy Measurement for their data on potential claimant pain points and any analysis of root causes. The data might point to specific communications that are problematic. Also, if the team uses the above data to establish a baseline, later they can measure the impact of the plain language initiative against that baseline.

Takeaway: Take stock of all public facing communications—both print and online—to assess what is being communicated and how.

STEP 2
PRIORITIZE IMPROVEMENTS

Purpose: Decide on criteria and determine the highest-priority communications that need to be reviewed first.

Action: Given budget, time, and staff constraints, the agency will need to prioritize documents for revision. The agency can use the following criteria:

- Reach: How many people currently receive this communication? For how many people is this communication relevant?
- Type of communication: Is the communication merely informational or does the claimant need to respond or take action?
- Consequence: What typically happens when this communication is ignored or misunderstood? Could it lead to denial of a claim? Could there be direct financial or legal repercussions? Does the communication include vital information?
- Pain points: Does the language conflict with other communications? Are claimants currently complaining or struggling (e.g., not responding, not complying, or repeatedly making the same errors)? Are staff receiving repeated questions or issues stemming from this communication?
- Legal requirements: Is there specific language that is legally required and must be preserved verbatim?
- Complexity: Is the communication full of jargon or legalese? Is it dense or disorganized?
- Logistics: Which other communications are connected? Who is needed to make the change and what technology is involved? What is the cost?

Takeaway: It is unrealistic to revise the full inventory of communications all at once; the agency needs to prioritize.
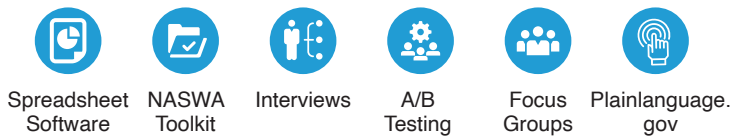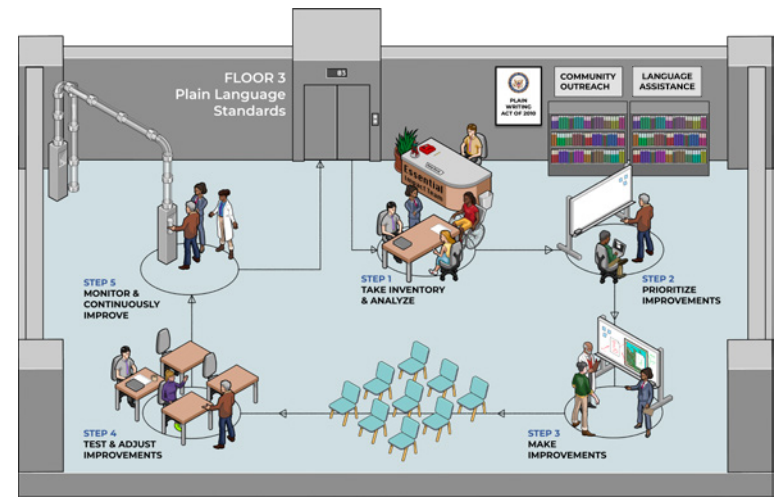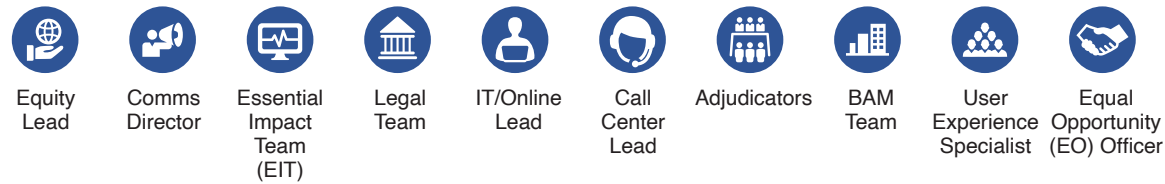
STEP 3
MAKE IMPROVEMENTS

Purpose: Plain language is about more than word choice. (Terms like "able and available" and "waiting week" still cause confusion.) Use all available tools—including behavioral insights and information design principles—to craft simple, effective communications.[10]

Action: Make plain language improvements, starting with the highest-priority communications. Plain language revisions may include:

- Targeting writing to the specific audience and their needs
- Re-organizing content in a logical outline
- Making clear calls to action with clear due dates and steps
- Cutting unnecessary text
- Replacing text with accessible tables or visuals where helpful
- Using visual hierarchy to emphasize the most important information
- Using active voice and present tense
- Using the simplest forms of verbs
- Replacing jargon and legalese with simpler terms where feasible

Takeaway: See attachment 3.1 in the Appendix for an example of an effective plain language update.
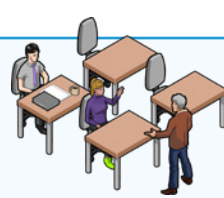
STEP 4
TEST & ADJUST IMPROVEMENTS

Purpose: Have the legal team review the proposed changes. Then test with users for comprehension and check to ensure that no important details were lost when simplifying the language.[11]

Action: Conduct user testing with diverse users to see how well users understand the new content. Claimant advocacy groups (CAGs) can assist with recruiting testers. This is especially important for communication materials that have undergone significant revision or redesign. User testing could involve techniques such as usability tests, interviews, focus groups, and testing different versions of text with different segments of users ("A/B testing"). But it must involve real, outside users. Internal "user acceptance testing" performed by staff alone will not suffice.

It is important to test not just for readability, but also for accurate comprehension. After seeing the new content, ensure the test users correctly understand the policy and complete the task successfully. Ensure that important details are not lost in the process of simplifying.

Takeaway: As revisions are made, it is important to not lose sight of the end users' perspective.

STEP 5
MONITOR & CONTINUOUSLY IMPROVE

Purpose: Measure impact and establish internal plain language writing guidelines. Continuously monitor and improve communications.

Research: Continually review communications and conduct user testing. Catalog the feedback and analysis and use this to update the internal plain language guidelines, creating a cycle of continuous improvement.

Action: Establish internal plain language guidelines and standardized review processes for new communications. For example, before creating a new communication, staff should check the indexed inventory (see Step 1 - Take Inventory & Analyze) to avoid duplicative and potentially conflicting communications.

Takeaway: Making plain language enhancements is not a one-time exercise, rather it is an ongoing and iterative process of continuous improvement.

LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE SERVICES

State UI program obligations to collect language data and provide language assistance services are governed by CFR 29 part 38 and explained briefly in UIPL No. 02-16 and UIPL No. 02-16, Change 1. This document is a strategic roadmap to integrate and deliver language assistance services that comply with legal requirements, lessen the burden on staff, and position state UI agencies to improve communications and overall customer experience (CX) for limited English proficiency (LEP) claimants and members of the public. This guide includes a step-by-step process to identify and prioritize content containing vital information, select the languages requiring advance translation, integrate proper and accurate language assistance services, and implement procedures to measure impact in order to make improvements on a continual basis.

POTENTIAL IMPACTS

Improve Customer Experience
Reduce the number of barriers for LEP individuals while obtaining information about, filing for, and engaging with the UI benefits system leads to an improved experience.

Reduce Claimant Errors
LEP claimants can file UI applications more accurately, reducing resources needed to correct claimant errors.

Lessen Burden on UI Staff
Clearer internal processes for providing language assistance services mean fewer queries across UI departments, leading to reduced workload.

Improve Improper Payment Rate
If claimants better understand the instructions, they can avoid accidental misreporting. This can reduce case load and back and forth for adjudicators.
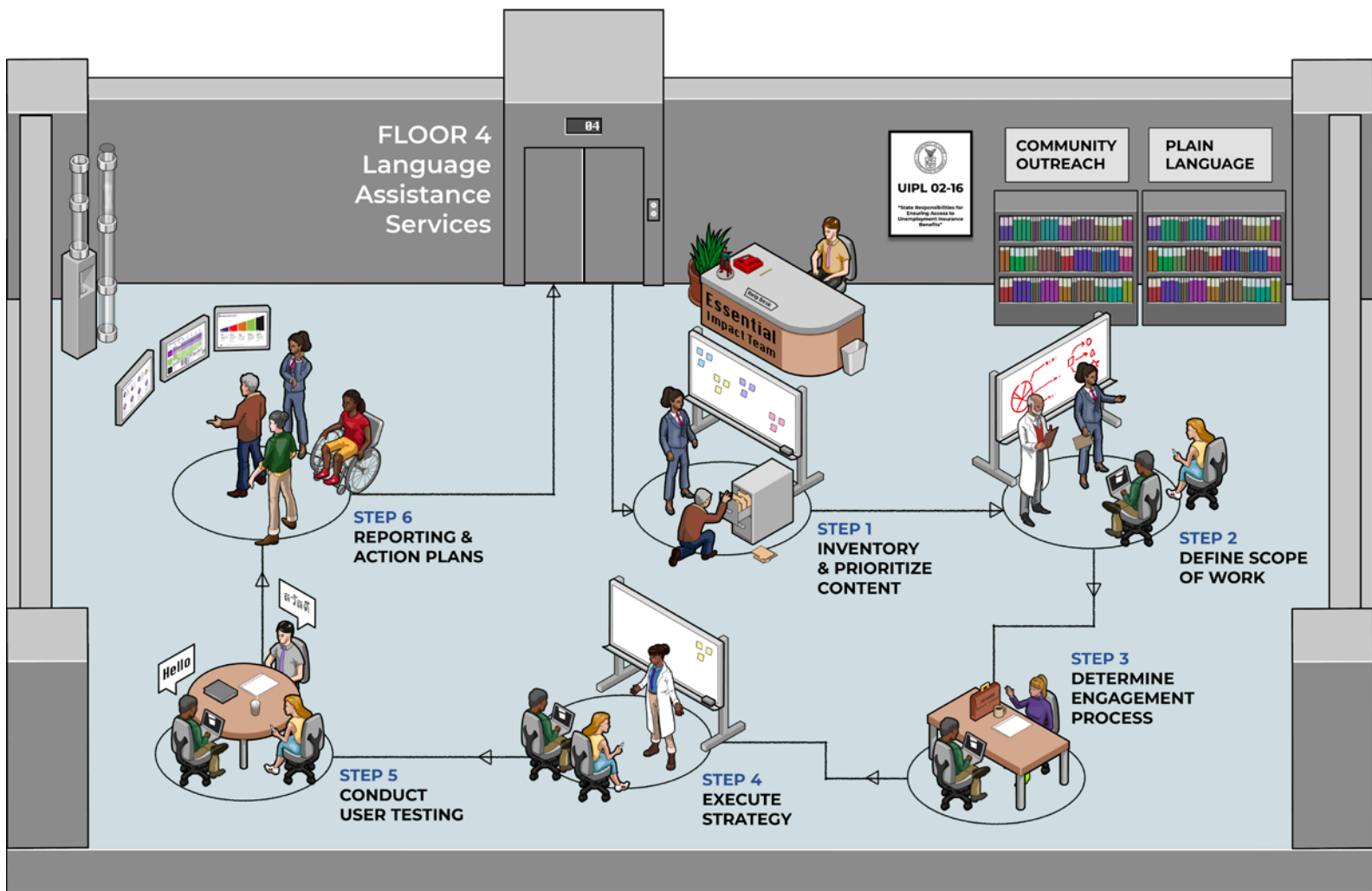
VISUAL REFERENCES

THE TUBE SYSTEM
The tube system represents the interconnectivity between floors and how data should flow between them.

COMMUNITY BOOKCASE
Represents the importance of leveraging community outreach insights to select the languages required for translation.
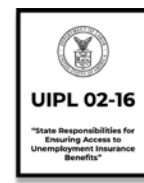
UIPL 02-16 POSTER
U.S. DOL UIPL 02-16 is a critical reference document when UI agencies are providing proper language assistance.
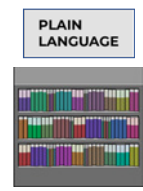
PLAIN LANGUAGE BOOKCASE
Represents how UI agencies must address Plain Language prior to beginning Language Assistance Service improvements.

PROCEED TO THE STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE
Are you ready to discover the steps necessary to enact this topic? Click on the arrow located on the right to proceed to the step-by-step guide for this topic.

RETURN TO THE LOBBY
Interested in traveling to another floor? Use our "virtual elevator" to navigate the document. Click on the arrow located on the right to return to the lobby and floor directory.

LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE SERVICES

Develop a plan for providing language assistance services that are consistent with the requirements of 29 CFR part 38, and particularly with 29 CFR sections 38.9 and 38.41(b)(2). These services must include translation of vital information as defined in 29 CFR 38.4(ttt) into languages spoken by a significant number or portion of the population eligible to be served, or likely to be encountered, by the UI program.[12]

TOOLS & RESOURCES

- Spreadsheet Software
- Census Data
- ETA 203 Reports
- RFP Template
- Vendor Services & Training
- Focus Groups
- Business Intelligence Tool
- Data Collection Tool

STAKEHOLDERS

- Equity Lead
- Comms Director
- IT/Online Lead
- Data Analyst
- Procurement Officer
- UI Program Director
- Third Party Vendor
- Equal Opportunity (EO) Officer

STEPS IN DEPTH

STEP 1
INVENTORY & PRIORITIZE CONTENT

Purpose: Develop an inventory of online resources and communications to inform and help drive the request for proposal (RFP) / procurement process to create a strong scope of work that can be leveraged later in the process as needed.

Research: The online resources can include the UI website (including any online claims-filing or work search certification processes, as well as online appeals of determinations), videos, social media content, and downloadable content. Communications can include printed educational materials and correspondence delivered to claimants. Materials that contain vital information should be prioritized.[13]

Action: Preliminary prioritization should include all documents containing vital information, including (but not limited to) Adjudication Notices, Waiver Form, FAQs/Instructions, UI Application, Appeals Information, and Point of Contact for Questions. It should be made clear who is responsible for final determination of which documents or other communications contain vital information. When priority and inventory are set, it will be important to consider if any of the documents might contain PII to ensure that information isn't inadvertently shared with staff or vendors.

STEP 2
DEFINE SCOPE OF WORK

Purpose: Develop process, procedures, and a detailed scope of work for the project, which can be completed internally or externally by a vendor.[14]

Research: Use internal UI data reports and publicly available data[15] to identify languages into which vital information must be translated and to better understand how claimants and members of the public can currently access UI services and information in appropriate languages other than English.[16] Leverage your EIT and Equal Opportunity Officer to help guide the development process.

Action: Develop a scope of work to include: (1) Qualified human translators to provide translations for all vital information and other communications identified in Step 1 - Inventory & Prioritize Content; (2) Creation of customer UI agency glossary in each language identified; (3) Quality control measures; (4) Any relevant staff training; and (5) Data collection and reporting. Once the scope is determined, it will be important to identify the expected budget options in preparation for step 3.
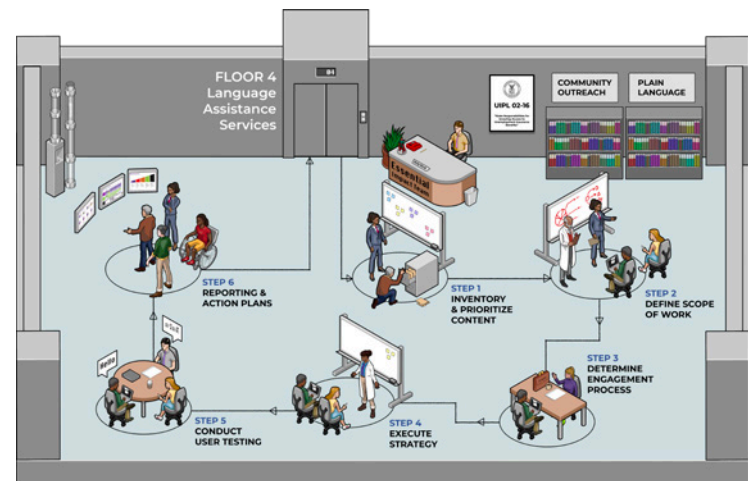
Consideration: Interviews may be required to determine key barriers to LEP individuals.

STEP 3
DETERMINE ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

Purpose: Examine scope of work to determine if it can be competed in-house or requires engagement of a third-party vendor.

Research: Ideally, the scope of work would be addressed by certified and full-time interpreters and/or translators on staff for each language selected. If there are not currently certified interpreters and/or translators on staff, consider hiring a vendor that employs skilled and certified interpreters and/or translators.[17] A fully functioning IT team will seamlessly update the online environment to incorporate translated materials.

Action: Determine the capability and cost-benefit to funding internal merit staff to complete items outlined in the scope of work. If the work cannot be completed internally, work with a procurement officer to develop an RFP process to select a third-party vendor, leveraging the scope of work created in step 2. The analysis, review, and oversight processes can be led by the UI Director and/or EIT in consultation with the EO Officer. In some instances, you might not need an RFP and an existing contract can be leveraged. Work with procurement team as needed to determine direction.

STEP 4
EXECUTE STRATEGY

Purpose: Develop an actionable plan to implement language assistance services aligning with Step 2 - Define Scope of Work and Step 3 - Engagement Process, along with defining data and reporting processes.

Research: Identify metrics to measure the usage and impact of the enhancements to language assistance services. Key metrics should be captured during all interaction points between the agency and claimant or member of the public and should include demographics, preferred languages, requests by UI Phases, and resolution rates.

Action: Work with in-house team or approved vendor to implement all steps and components within the scope of work. Collaborate with data Analyst to manage and monitor performance metrics determined in this step to ensure successful implementation and ability to carry out reporting and action plans. It will be important to revisit user testing (step 5 - Conduct User Testing) on an ongoing basis to ensure your strategy continues to match the needs of the population.[18]

Takeaway: Develop a data-based action plan to improve language assistance services.

STEP 5
CONDUCT USER TESTING

Purpose: Conduct user testing with community groups and claimants to identify and address translation challenges.

Research: Recruit diverse participants from claimant advocacy groups (CAGs) to provide feedback on translated vital information and other language assistance services. Leverage the "listening posts" for feedback and questions (as referenced in Topic 1, "Equitable Access Data & Metrics"). This step should become a formalized and ongoing practice, in coordination with step 6.

Action: Conduct user testing with claimants to capture feedback based on their experiences so improvements can be made continuously. In addition to user testing, feedback should be synthesized and compiled for future translation updates. It is recommended to include any stakeholders, regardless of eligibility or application status, in the user testing efforts. CAGs can be leveraged to identify LEP individuals who might be interested in participating in user testing and feedback efforts.

Takeaway: Work with CAGs, claimants, and members of the public to inform system of changes.

STEP 6
REPORTING & ACTION PLANS

Purpose: Enact data collection and reporting mechanisms, including ensuring that data on individuals' LEP status and preferred language are being collected pursuant to 29 CFR 38.41(b)(2), to perform continuous improvements and generate action plans.

Research: Work with the in-house team or vendor to launch initiative. In addition, coordinate outreach campaigns with the communications director to educate claimants and members of the public on how, where, and when they can access language assistance services, as required by 29 CFR 38.9(e). This information should be provided in appropriate languages. This is an opportunity to collaborate with advocacy groups to get feedback from LEP individuals and continue user testing.

Action: All data accumulated should be compiled and visualized in quarterly reports for agency leadership. The reports should highlight trends, claimant feedback and satisfaction, new barriers, or need for additional translations, to inform the creation of resulting action (improvement) plans.

Takeaway: Collect and leverage data to plan for future improvements.

ENDNOTES

FLOOR 01

¹ Personal Identifiable Information (PII)
To mitigate PII concerns, it is recommended that the agency use "data marts" or similar data management solutions that segregate and isolate equitable access data from PII, for the purposes of dashboard creation and analysis. A data mart is a data storage technique that may pull data from multiple sources (both internal or external) and stores this information in an isolated or partitioned, smaller data set. By using this method, demographic data stored for equitable access analysis will lack the corresponding data or "key" required to tie demographics to individual persons. Additionally, restrictions should be put in placed around the granularity of location and age data stored within the data mart. Specifically, data stored should not be more granular than the Zip Code and birth year level. Data collection, storage, and usage must be compliant with requirements regarding protection and disclosure of confidential information per 20 CFR, Part 603, 29 CFR 38.41, and state laws.

² Demographic Data Collection
All processes to measure critical equitable data points to collect demographic data must be in accordance with obligations surrounding demographic data collection set forth in 29 CFR 38.41.

³ Data Dashboard Publication
It is recommended that UI agencies have both public and internal dashboards, along with internal function-specific views. PII must not be made available and must comply with the safeguard and security requirements of 20 CFR 603.9 and 29 CFR 38.41(b).

FLOOR 02

⁴ Identification of Groups
Identify groups to which outreach is required by 29 CFR 38.40. These include "members of the various groups protected by these regulations, including but not limited to persons of different sexes, various racial and ethnic/national origin groups, various religions, individuals with limited English proficiency, individuals with disabilities, and individuals in different age groups."

⁵ Underserved Communities – Executive Order 13985
Reference the term "underserved communities" further defined in Executive Order 13985: The term "underserved communities" refers to populations sharing a particular characteristic, as well as geographic communities, that have been systematically denied a full opportunity to participate in aspects of economic, social, and civic life, as exemplified by the list in the preceding definition of "equity."

⁶ Implementation of the Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity Provisions of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act
Identify populations protected by WIOA Section 188 and 29 CFR part 38. LINK

⁷ Compliance Requirements for Collateral
The collateral should be translated in multiple languages (consistent with the requirements of 29 CFR 38.9) and provided in alternate formats for people with disabilities (consistent with 29 CFR 38.15). It is essential that outreach efforts comply, as a minimum, with the legal requirements regarding communications with LEP individuals and persons with disabilities.

⁸ Compliance Requirements for Meetings
The meetings should be interpreted in appropriate languages, including sign language and verbal non-English languages, consistent with the requirements of 29 CFR part 38. Having auxiliary aids and services available, such as real time captioning, is important as well.

FLOOR 03

⁹ Vital Information 29 CFR 38.4(ttt)
Develop an inventory of resources and communications that include "vital information" as that phrase is defined in 29 CFR 38.4(ttt):

Vital information means information, whether written, oral, or electronic, that is necessary for an individual to understand how to obtain any aid, benefit, service, and/or training; necessary for an individual to obtain any aid, benefit, service, and/or training; or required by law. Examples of documents containing vital information include, but are not limited to applications, consent, and complaint forms; notices of rights and responsibilities; notices advising LEP individuals of their rights under this part, including the availability of free language assistance; rulebooks; written tests that do not assess English language competency, but rather assess competency for a particular license, job, or skill for which English proficiency is not required; and letters or notices that require a response from the beneficiary or applicant, participant, or employee.

¹⁰ Federal Plain Language Guidelines
Vocabulary and grade reading level are only a small part of plain language. Agency staff should revisit the Federal Plain Language Guidelines' more expansive definition, as well as National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA) materials, to see how behavioral insights (BI) and human-centered design factor in.

¹¹ Plain Language Promising Practices
Ask the legal team to review the new content and ensure compliance with both state and federal law. This is a critical juncture. Take care not to revert to legalese. Work collaboratively with legal to accommodate the requirements while still preserving plain, effective communication. Ensure that important details are not lost in the process of simplifying. Ironically, the phrase "plain language" illustrates the risk of oversimplifying. It has led to shallow interpretations. User testing is essential because plain language can result in individuals not understanding the required content if the language is not drafted to sufficiently convey the information.

FLOOR 04

¹² Developing a Plan for Providing Language Assistance Services
The Language Assistance Services must include translation of vital information as defined in 29 CFR 38.4(ttt) into languages spoken by a significant number or proportion of the population eligible to be served, or likely to be encountered, by the UI program. The services must also include collection of information about individuals' LEP status and preferred language; taking reasonable steps to meet the particularized language needs of LEP individuals who seek to learn about, participate in, and/or access the UI program, including provision of oral interpretation; and ensuring that Babel notices, as defined in 29 CFR 38.4(i), are included with all communications of vital information.

¹³ Vital Information 29 CFR 38.4(ttt)
Develop an inventory of resources and communications that include "vital information" as that phrase is defined in 29 CFR 38.4(ttt). See endnote 9 (above). Set a priority level for each piece of content to determine a starting point for the larger efforts to translate and/or provide content through oral interpretation (depending on language) and insert Babel notice. For communications not including vital information, priority can be determined by several data points, including frequency of use or frequency of LEP claimant error.

¹⁴ Developing Language Assistance Processes and Procedures
In developing processes, procedures, and scope of work, agencies should consult the requirements of 29 CFR 38.9 and 38.41(b)(2). In addition, the guidelines set forth in the Appendix to 29 CFR 38.9 provide a clear framework for developing a written plan for ensuring meaningful access to LEP individuals.

¹⁵ Data Sources for Determining Language Assistance Services
Use LEP.gov/maps, Census data, and ETA 203 Reports, local data that may be collected by other government agencies such as school districts or refugee agencies, and input from community groups as well as information regarding claimants' preferred languages collected pursuant to 29 CFR 38.41(b)(2), to identify languages into which vital information must be translated and better understand how claimants and members of the public can currently access UI services and information in appropriate languages other than English.

**¹⁶ Review of Current Language Assistance Translation Services**
When examining Language Assistance processes, the UI agency should review all current methods of providing language assistance services to claimants and members of the public, including but not limited to translation of vital information and provision of interpreting services, as well as Plain Language Standards.

¹⁷ Automated Translation vs Human Translation
29 CFR 38.9 provides that "[a]ny language assistance services, whether oral interpretation or written translation, must be accurate …" Automated tools such as Google Translate are designed for everyday use and are generally not sufficiently accurate for handling business or government-related content without being reviewed and corrected by a human translator.

¹⁸ Babel Notices and Oral Interpretation
Once vital information has been identified and translated and/or provided in other languages and Babel notices have been included as required by the regulations, other resources and communications may be identified and translated and/or provided through oral interpretation.
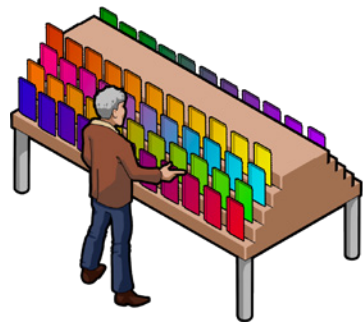
APPENDIX
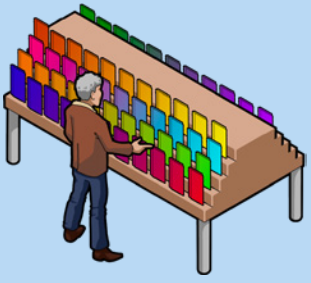
WHAT RESOURCES DO I NEED?

Welcome to the Appendix. Here you will find all of the attachments, resources, and links referenced throughout each floor in the Equitable Access Toolkit. The resources are categorized by floor, allowing for the user to successfully navigate the information provided. Each resource listed below is an active link. By clicking on the resource, the user will automatically be redirected to an Toolkit page or an external document or site where the information can be found.

FLOOR 01 — **EQUITABLE ACCESS DATA & METRICS**

APPENDIX 1.1: What Is An Essential Team? **LINK**
APPENDIX 1.2: Tiered Data Attributes To Collect **LINK**
APPENDIX 1.3: Recommended Metrics To Collect **LINK**
REFERENCE: UI Performs Core Measures **LINK**

FLOOR 02 — **COMMUNITY OUTREACH**

REFERENCE: U.S. DOL Equity Plan **LINK**
REFERENCE: "Building Vaccine Confidence Through Community Engagement" **LINK**
REFERENCE: CDC Brainstorming Techniques **LINK**

FLOOR 03 — **PLAIN LANGUAGE STANDARDS**

APPENDIX 3.1: Plain Language Examples **LINK**
REFERENCE: Plainlanguage.gov **LINK**
REFERENCE: Plain Writing Act Of 2010 **LINK**
REFERENCE: NASWA – Essentials Of Plain Language **LINK**

FLOOR 04 — **LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE SERVICES**

REFERENCE: UIPL 02-16 And UIPL 02-16, Change 1 **LINK**
REFERENCE: Limited English Proficiency (Site) **LINK**
REFERENCE: Federal Register Notice, Volume 68, Number 103, Part IV **LINK**

FLOOR 05 — **ONLINE ACCESSIBILITY**

UNDER CONSTRUCTION

FLOOR 06 — **DIGITAL USER EXPERIENCE**

UNDER CONSTRUCTION

FLOOR 07 — **IMPROVING CLAIMANT ACCESS**

UNDER CONSTRUCTION

FLOOR 08 — **CONTACT CENTER OPERATIONS**

UNDER CONSTRUCTION

FLOOR 09 — **EQUITY SAFEGUARDS FOR PROGRAM INTEGRITY**
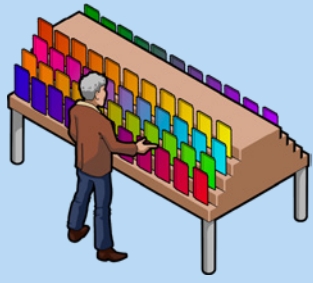
UNDER CONSTRUCTION

FLOOR 10 — **EQUITY SAFEGUARDS FOR AUTOMATED PROCESSES**

UNDER CONSTRUCTION

NEED HELP OR WANT TO CONNECT?

Please direct inquiries and feedback to the appropriate Employment and Training Administration (ETA) Regional Office.

APPENDIX 1.1:
What is an Essential Impact Team?

What is the Essential Impact Team (EIT)?

The Essential Impact Team (EIT) consists of merit staff who will facilitate equity data collection and use across the organization and will use data insights to drive continuous improvements to equity in state unemployment insurance (UI) agencies.

The resources staffed on the EIT may differ from state to state based on the makeup of their UI agency, however we generally recommend including the following cross-functional roles: Information Technology (IT), Communications, Labor Market Information (LMI) Team, Legal, and Contact Center Operations and Equity Lead.

In the Toolkit, Topic 1, Step 1 is assembling the EIT within the state UI agency (Figure 1). Throughout the rest of the Toolkit, the EIT is included in every Topic as they are crucial for leading and executing recommended actions (Figure 2).

FIGURE 1

FIGURE 2
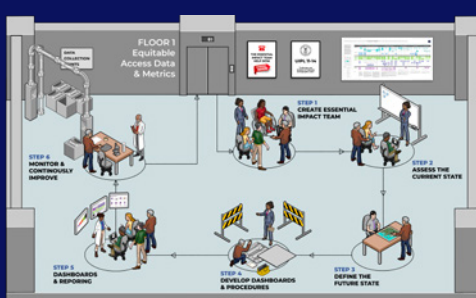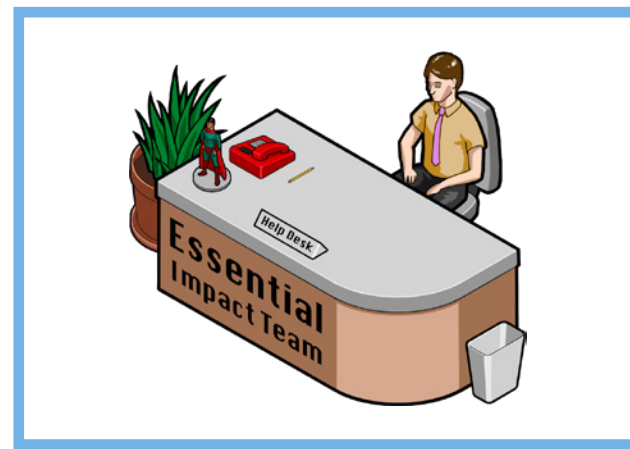
RETURN TO FLOOR 01:
EQUITABLE ACCESS DATA & METRICS

Want to return to Floor 01: Equitable Access Data & Metrics?
Simply click on the arrow to the right and return to the step-by-step guide.

APPENDIX 1.2:
Tiered Data Attributes to Collect

Tiered Data Attributes to Collect
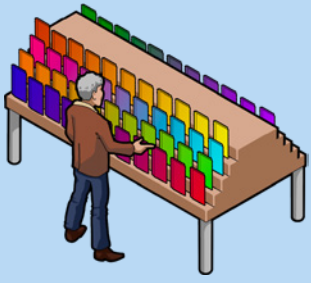
Major data points relevant to demographic analysis.	**Tier 1**
	➢ **Gender:** Male, Female, Transgender, Non-Binary, Other ➢ **Citizenship Status:** US Citizen, VISA, Green Card, etc. ➢ **Ethnicity:** Hispanic or Latinx, Non-Hispanic or Latinx ➢ **Race:** White, Black or African American, American Indian and Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, Some Other Race, Two Races, Mixed ➢ **Preferred Language**: English, Spanish, etc. ➢ **Birth Year:** YYYY ➢ **Veteran Status:** Y/N ➢ **Disability Status:** Y/N, Prefer not to answer ➢ **Application Status** or **Level**
Leads to more meaningful analysis on equity and geospatial mapping.	**Tier 2**
	➢ **Claimant Residence:** Claimant City, County, Zip Code ➢ **Preferred Communication Method:** Phone, E-mail, In-Person, etc. ➢ **Education Achievement**: High School Diploma, GED, Vocational-Technical School, Some College, College Degree, Grad Degree ➢ **Income:** $$ before unemployment insurance (i.e., most recent monthly income)
Additional data points that could be used in predictive analysis to test other possible relationships to equity.	**Tier 3**
	➢ **Marital Status:** Single, Married, Widowed, Separated, Divorced ➢ **Dependents:** Y/N ➢ **Number of Dependents:** # ➢ **Country of Origin** ➢ **Industry Type:** Pre-selected industry type name from NAICS codes

*Under the regulations governing the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, certain demographic information must be stored in a manner that ensures confidentiality and must be used only for particular purposes. See 29 CFR 38.41(b)(2). Additionally, where designation of individuals by race or ethnicity is required, the guidelines of the Office of Management and Budget must be used. 29 CFR 38.41(d); UIPL 11-14 (discussing the functionally identical demographic data collection provisions of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA)).
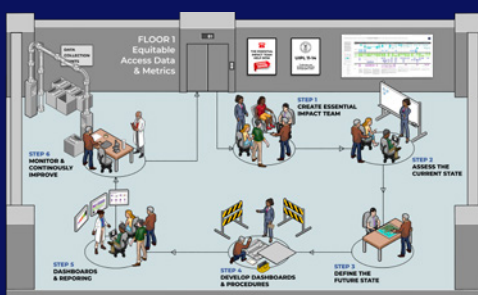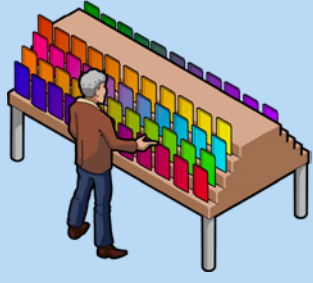
APPENDIX 1.3:
Recommended Metrics to Collect

Recommended Metrics to Collect
The two tables below list demographic metrics and operational metrics that UI agencies are recommended to collect. There is value in combining the two: The agency can disaggregate or "slice" the operational metrics by the demographic variables to investigate any disparities in equity or accessibility that may exist within specific processes or activities across the claimant journey.
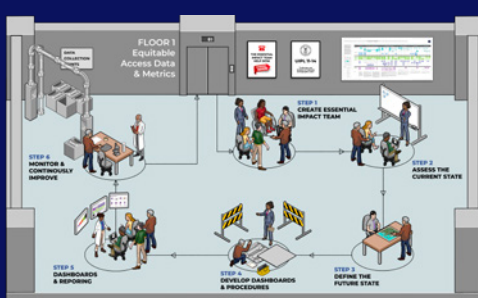
All data collection and storage must be in compliance with 20 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 603. Any data used for analysis must be aggregated to preserve anonymity. Information regarding claimants' race/ethnicity, sex, age, limited English proficiency, and preferred language must be stored in a manner that ensures confidentiality.[1] Any medical or disability-related information obtained about a particular individual, including information that could lead to the disclosure of a disability, must be collected on separate forms, and all such information, whether in hard copy, electronic, or both, must be maintained in one or more separate files, apart from any other information about the individual, and treated as confidential.[2] Where designation of individuals by race or ethnicity is required, the guidelines of the Office of Management and Budget must be used.[3]

Recommended demographic metrics

| FIELD NAME	SAMPLE DESCRIPTION	TYPICAL METHOD OF COLLECTION[1]
RACE	White, Black or African American, American Indian and Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, Some Other Race, Two Races, Mixed	ACTIVE – Optional self-identification + PASSIVE – Cross-referenced against external sources
ETHNICITY	Hispanic or Latinx, Non-Hispanic or Latinx	
PREFERRED_LANGUAGE	English, Spanish, French, etc.	ACTIVE – Claimant Entered
DATE_OF_BIRTH	MM/DD/YYYY	ACTIVE – Claimant Entered
VETERAN_STATUS	Y/N	ACTIVE – Claimant Entered
MARITAL_STATUS	Single, Married, Widowed, Separated, Divorced	ACTIVE – Claimant Entered
DISABILITY	Y/N, Prefer not to Answer	ACTIVE – Claimant Entered
GENDER	Man, Woman, Transgender, Non-Binary, Other, Prefer not to answer	ACTIVE – Claimant Entered
PREFERRED_COMMUNICATION_METHOD	Phone, E-mail, Text, Postal mail	ACTIVE – Claimant Entered
LOCATION	Claimant City, County, Zip Code	PASSIVE – Pulled from claimant address
EDUCATION_ATTAINED	High School Diploma, GED, Vocational-Technical School, Some College, College Degree, Grad Degree	ACTIVE – Claimant Entered
CITIZENSHIP	US Citizen, VISA, Green Card, etc.	ACTIVE – Claimant Entered
INDUSTRY (MOST RECENT)	Pre-selected industry type name from North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) codes	To Confirm in Discovery Phase
INCOME OR INCOME_RANGE	Dollar amount before unemployment insurance	To Confirm in Discovery Phase
NUMBER_OF_DEPENDENTS	Y/N in claiming legal dependents or children	To Confirm in Discovery Phase

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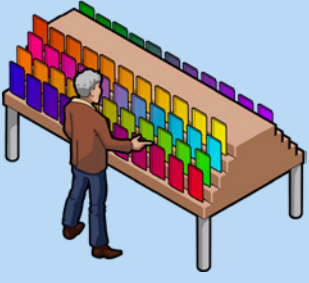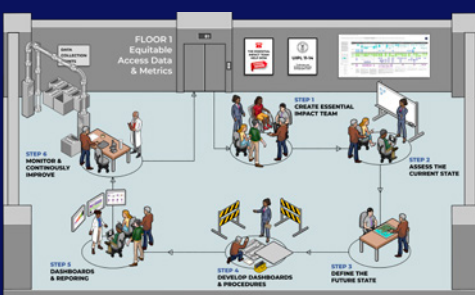
APPENDIX 1.3 (CONTINUED): Recommended Metrics to Collect

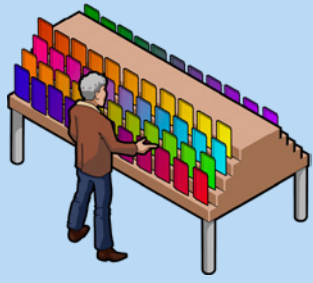|		
NUMBER_OF_DEPENDENTS	Y/N in claiming legal dependents or children	To Confirm in Discovery Phase
UNION MEMBERSHIP STATUS	Y/N, Prefer not to answer NOTE: This question should be optional	ACTIVE – Claimant Entered
UI Claims Filing Method	The method that claimants use to file for UI benefits	PASSIVE – pulls from the Unemployment Insurance Benefit Accuracy Measurement (BAM) data, stored in the UI database
EXTERNAL DATA SOURCES		
UNEMPLOYMENT DATA	%/# of persons unemployed	PASSIVE – Pulled external data source: Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS)
BROADBAND ACCESSIBILITY	%/# of persons with access to broadband internet	PASSIVE – Pulled from external data source: American Community Survey (ACS)
MOBILE ACCESSIBILITY	%/# of persons with access to mobile device networks	PASSIVE – Pulled from external data source: American Community Survey (ACS)

Recommended operational metrics[5]

FIELD NAME	SAMPLE DESCRIPTION	TYPICAL METHOD OF COLLECTION[6]
TOTAL_BENEFITS_PAID	Dollar amount as of report date	PASSIVE - AUTOMATED
WORKSTREAM[X]_DURATION	The amount of time (days) taken to advance through major steps and/or workstreams of claimant journey workflow	PASSIVE –Tied to UI application Call Center data, and workflows
TOTAL_WEEKS_COMPENSATED	Number of weeks as of report date	PASSIVE – Tied to UI application and workflows
REASON_FOR_MONETARY_DENIAL	Reason associated with the monetary denial. Valid values could include NA, insufficient wage or hours, misconduct, failure to meet wage requirement, etc.	ACTIVE – Entry by UI agency staff into system
REASON_FOR_NONMONETARY _DETERMINATION	Reason associated with the monetary denial. Valid values could include NA, discharge, voluntary leaving work, etc.	ACTIVE – Entry by UI agency staff into system
CLAIM_SENT_TO_APPEALS_ ELIGIBILITY_DETERMINATION	Y/N	ACTIVE/PASSIVE – Dependent upon UI agency system functionality and maturity
DATE_SENT_TO_ APPEALS_ ELIGIBILITY_DETERMINATION	Date the appeal was received	ACTIVE/PASSIVE – Dependent upon UI agency system functionality and maturity
DATE_DECISION_RENDERED	Date the decision was rendered	ACTIVE – Entry by UI agency staff into system
MISSED_SUBMISSION_DEADLINE	Y/N – Captures whether a document submitted for fact-finding was received after a deadline had passed	PASSIVE – Tied to UI application and workflows
UI Replacement Rates[7]	The Replacement Rate is the ratio of the claimant's weekly benefit amount (WBA) to the claimant's average weekly wage	PASSIVE – pulls from the UI Benefit Accuracy Measurement

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APPENDIX 1.3 (CONTINUED):
Recommended Metrics to Collect

		(BAM) data, stored in the UI database
UI Appeals Reversal Rates[8]	The reversal rate is the percentage of the total number of cases heard by an Unemployment Insurance Lower/Higher Authority appellate body that were reversed in favor of the appellant	PASSIVE – pulled and computed using data provided on the Employment and Training Administrative (ETA) 5130 Benefit Appeals Report
Average Length of Appeals	The average time it takes for a state UI agency to complete an appeal	PASSIVE – pulled from the ETA 5130 – Benefit Appeals Report; ETA 9054 – Appeals Time Lapse; and ETA 9055 – Appeals Case Aging
ID Verification Result	PASS/FAIL Provides a view of % of ID verifications passed	PASSIVE - Automated
CALL_VOLUME	Total call volume	PASSIVE – Automatically captured
ISSUE/REASON_FOR_CALL	Captures the reason the claimant has contacted the call center	ACTIVE – Entry by UI agency Call Center staff into data system
FIRST_CALL_RESOLUTION	Percentage (%) of calls whose issue was resolved in one call	PASSIVE – Automatically captured by Call Center data system
CALL_DURATION	Average duration of call in minutes	PASSIVE – Automatically captured by Call Center data system
USE_OF_TRANSLATION_SERVICE	Y/N – Captures whether the caller required the use of translation services	ACTIVE – Entry by UI agency Call Center staff into data system
ABANDONMENT_RATE	Percentage of how many customers terminate their call before it is answered in the contact center	PASSIVE – Automatically captured by Call Center data system

[1] 29 CFR 38.41(b)(2)

[2] 29 CFR 38.41(b)(3)

[3] 29 CFR 38.41(d); Unemployment Insurance Program Letter 11-14 discussing the functionally identical demographic data collection provisions of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA)

[4] Methods of collection will differ between state UI programs, based on how they collect and store relevant data. This column distinguishes between data which is typically collected ACTIVELY (manually through direct claimant or staff entry through forms or applications) or PASSIVELY (automatically through system data or external sources)

[5] Most of these are pulled from or stem from UIPL 11-14 and are Tiger Team learnings

[6] Methods of collection will differ between state UI programs, based on how they collect and store relevant data. This column distinguishes between data which is typically collected ACTIVELY (manually through direct claimant or staff entry through forms or applications) or PASSIVELY (automatically through system data or external sources)

[7] US Department of Labor, Employment & Training Administration, Unemployment Insurance Program Performance, https://oui.doleta.gov/unemploy/performance1.asp

[8] US Department of Labor, Employment & Training Administration, Unemployment Insurance Program Performance, https://oui.doleta.gov/unemploy/performance1.asp
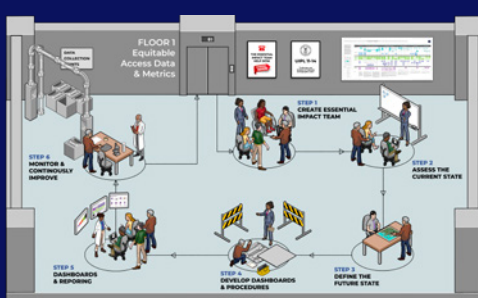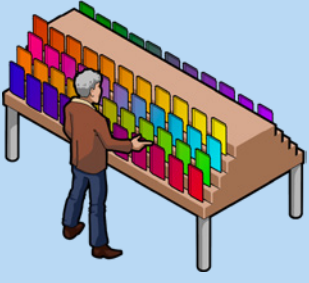

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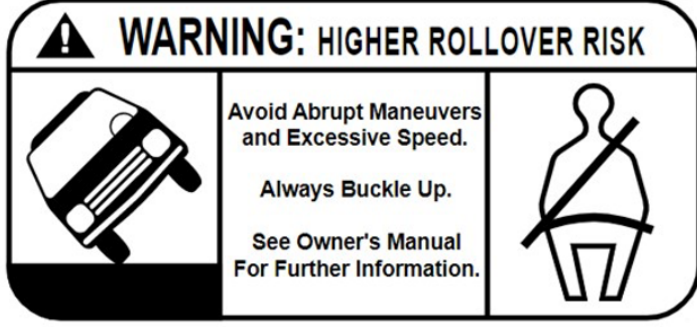Simply click on the arrow to the right and return to the step-by-step guide.

APPENDIX 3.1:
# Plain Language Examples

Plain Language Examples

This example from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration shows how plain language can involve more than the plain text—it is also about the design and presentation of information.

Before	After
This is a multipurpose passenger vehicle which will handle and maneuver differently from an ordinary passenger car, in driving conditions which may occur on streets and highways and off road. As with other vehicles of this type, if you make sharp turns or abrupt maneuvers, the vehicle may roll over or may go out of control and crash. You should read driving guidelines and instructions in the Owner's Manual, and WEAR YOUR SEAT BELTS AT ALL TIMES.	⚠ WARNING: HIGHER ROLLOVER RISK Avoid Abrupt Maneuvers and Excessive Speed. Always Buckle Up. See Owner's Manual For Further Information.

https://www.plainlanguage.gov/examples/before-and-after/car-safety/

The new version is attention-grabbing, communicates the danger, and gives actionable safety precautions. It keeps only the essential information. It takes the reader only a second or two to process. The visual approach also makes it more accessible and universal; individuals with limited English literacy or proficiency will probably still understand the message.

UI agencies should use all available tools—such as behavioral science and user experience design—to craft effective communications.
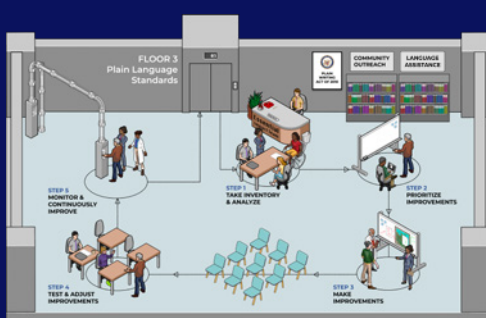
AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT – UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE MODERNIZATION
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Guidehouse

The Unemployment Insurance Equitable Access Toolkit