



MUE Toolkit Annotated Outline

Prepared by the Interstate UI Disaster Preparedness Workgroup

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LIST OF TABLES

To be developed as required.

LIST OF FIGURES

To be developed as required.

1 INTRODUCTION

Note to the reader: This document is a work-in-progress. The purpose of this document is to give the reader a list of the contents of the MUE Toolkit along with notes and partial preliminary drafts of the information to more clearly describe what the section contains.

1.1 Background

[This section provides information to put the MUE Toolkit in context.]

It is the policy of the United States Department of Labor (USDOL) to insure the continuity of operations of essential Unemployment Insurance (UI) programs. The primary objectives of the UI National Disaster Preparedness Planning Effort is to establish the protocols, methods, and organizations to materially assist and augment a state UI agency whose UI claims processing capacity has been rendered insufficient from:

- A reduction in a state UI agency's UI claims processing capacity resulting from an adverse event or emergency of any origin, or
- The onset of a Mass Unemployment Event (MUE) of any origin.

Because the type and nature of threats to the UI systems are diverse; encompassing adversity due to weather, volcanic action, terrorism, war, nuclear accident, earthquakes, disease, and man-made structure failures; the plan must:

- Be maintained at a high level of readiness
- Be capable of implementation both with and without warning
- Be operational no later than 24 hours after activation

1.2 Purpose

[This section explains the purpose of the MUE Toolkit.]

The MUE Toolkit can be considered a “chapter in” or an “addendum to” each states’ Continuity of Operations (COOP) or Disaster Response and Recovery Plan. The purpose of the MUE Toolkit is to provide the states with guidance they should follow to ensure each state is prepared to continue timely operations during an MUE or other emergency.

The MUE Toolkit also provides standard procedures and forms for engaging assistance from other state UI agencies.

1.3 Assumptions

[This section describes the assumptions the MUE Toolkit is based on.]

The MUE Toolkit assumes a major disaster is the cause of the MUE and that a “State of Emergency” has been declared under the Stafford Act.

States have a COOP for their UI systems therefore the MUE Toolkit assumes the affected or requesting state’s UI benefit system is operational (at either the main facility or an alternate site) and the states’ telephone and Internet systems are functional. If a state’s UI IT infrastructure is damaged or destroyed this situation is beyond the scope of the MUE toolkit.

The impacted state UI agency will ensure there is a resource assigned who is “reachable” and is either the “decision maker” or has access to the “decision makers” (MUE contact).

During the onset of an MUE the state UI agency’s first responsibilities are to take initial claims, make payments, and certify continued claims. Other essential functions that must continue (in no particular order) are address changes and employer reporting.

Every state has been educated on EMAC so they can decide whether or not they want to use the EMAC agreement.

Note: We need to add an assumption about the MUE distribution and Internal Communication websites when they are defined because it will affect the content and wording of some of the sections such as 2.2 and 3.1 among others.

1.4 Definition of Terms

Please refer to the glossary attached to the end of this document for the definitions of acronyms and uncommon terms used herein.

2 HOW TO USE THIS TOOLKIT

[This section includes step-by-step instructions and guidelines for the preparation and use of the tools.]

2.1 MUE Preparedness Guidelines

[This section includes checklists for the parts of the state UI agency’s COOP or Disaster Response and Recovery Plan that will be especially important during an MUE.]

Include on COOP checklist:

- State has an alternate computing facility that can be used in the event the primary facility is damaged or destroyed or a Disaster Services contract with SunGard, IBM, or other similar company that will provide alternate computing facilities.
- State has reviewed their Emergency Operations Center (EOC) guidelines and knows how to interact with EOC in the event of an emergency.
- State’s EOC has an alternate communications plan that uses satellite phones, amateur radio, or other similar forms of communication when the normal telecommunications infrastructure is damaged or destroyed.

- State has briefed EOC on an MUE and their potential role in providing alternate communications if required.
- State UI Agency has included MUE procedures in COOP.
- State UI Agency has included MUE simulations in COOP exercise plan.
- State UI Agency has included MUE procedures maintenance in COOP maintenance plans.

Include in state UI agency MUE checklist:

- MUE staffing considerations such as rehiring retirees, overtime, and state staffing restrictions among other items. State should know what to do (if anything is available) to rapidly increase knowledgeable staff?

2.2 MUE Preparedness Checklists

[This section includes guidance and checklists for MUE-specific items.]

Include on checklist:

- Establish MUE point-of-contact for the state UI agency

The MUE contact list will contain the main point-of-contact and an alternate for each state UI agency. The MUE contact is a resource that is “reachable” and is the “decision maker” or has access to the “decision makers.” The MUE contact list will be developed by USDOL and posted on the MUE Toolkit Internal Communications website.

- Establish emergency legal agreement signature authorities list for the state UI agency.

Legal agreement signature/approval authorities for your state UI agency may not be the same people as the MUE point-of-contact(s). These people have to have the authority to sign the emergency legal agreements with assisting states.

- Prepare model disaster communications information for external disaster web page

Note: The above is a placeholder. We are still developing the whole “external communication” concept.

- Establish procedures to keep MUE contacts and signature authorities lists current

Note: The above will include maintaining contact lists on MUE Toolkit website when the procedures are established.

- Posted links to the following websites on the MUE Toolkit Internal Communications website and have established a system to keep them current.

- USDOL Regional and Alternate Contact List
- State UI Agency Contacts

- FEMA Point of Contact List for Regions – This includes Disaster Recovery Center (DRC) contacts after the DRC is established.
- EMAC Point of Contact List
- Signature Authority List – These are the people who have the authority to sign and/or must approve the legal agreements.

Note: The above list is subject to frequent changes as we develop the MUE Toolkit website.

3 COMMUNICATIONS

[This section includes one or more templates and guidelines for the states, USDOL Regional Offices, and USDOL National Office as required on when and how to communicate during an MUE.]

3.1 Regional Communications Plan Guidance

[This section includes guidance and procedures for USDOL Regional Offices and associated states and may also include guidance for communication between regions.]

This section includes communications between requesting and assisting states.

Periodic contact throughout the disaster:

- The affected regional office should gather observations and questions from assisting states, compile them, and pass them on to the requesting state for their consideration and possible response.
- The affected regional office and affected state should communicate every day at the same time during the MUE.

Regional Office communications plan checklist should identify a session plan as part of their COOP in the event the RO is affected by the disaster also.

3.2 Internal Information Sharing

[This section contains information about the MUE Toolkit Internal Communications website and how to access and use it.]

Information posted in near real-time by authorized personnel only

Individual states and special groups of UI personnel will have access to it or be able to edit it via an ID and password (role-based access)

Affected state and/or region will post information during Disaster/MUE

Common instructions for gathering and communicating information, including common terminology will be established to “formalize and institutionalize” the process.

3.2.1 UI Community

This section will include a template to guide the format and content of a state UI agency's public information website and news release information for posting here so other state and regional office personnel will know where to look for the information they need to answer inquiries quickly.

3.2.2 Communications Between Requesting and Assisting States

Note: This section is still under consideration. We haven't decided yet if this should be direct state-to-state communication, should it be logged and if so by whom and for what purpose, and what the procedure should be (e.g. daily teleconference, weekly email reports, as required, etc.) among other things.

3.3 External Information Sharing

External communications strategy is to advise the public how to contact the affected UI agency to file and inquire about claims and what has changed as a result of the MUE.

3.3.1 Communications with Instructions for Claimants

This is a checklist for what should be in the public news release with emphasis on what has changed as a result of the MUE. Content may contain disaster news, areas impacted by the disaster, contact information, claim filing methods and instructions, other links and other state websites. The affected state prepares the release, posts it on their website, and provides link to Internal Communication Website.

3.4 RO Communications Plan Checklist

This checklist includes items for the RO to consider when communicating to requesting and assisting states both inside and outside of the region.

3.4.1 Periodic Contact Throughout the Disaster

3.4.2 Communications with Assisting States

3.4.3 Communications with Other States in Region

3.4.4 Communications with Other Regions

3.4.5 Communications with USDOL National Office

3.5 MUE Coordinating Procedures

Policies and Procedures for Coordinating MUE Interactions between Requesting and Assisting States, state EOC, and contracting entities.

4 LEGAL AGREEMENTS

The states can always enter into a legal agreement between themselves to exchange goods and services (state sovereignty) at any time. However, states may wish to one of the following agreements that have been established to expedite state-to-state support and payment during a State of Emergency.

4.1 EMAC Agreements

This is a two-tiered agreement for government and non-government emergency services. The first tier contains the boilerplate, terms, and conditions and is in the existing state EMAC agreement. The second tier is a Statement of Work that describes the specific services and costs for a particular instance and is approved before the services are delivered.

Note: We have to confirm our understanding of EMAC contracting.

4.2 USDOL Contracting/Payment Option

Note: We have to develop this section after we understand the process for contracting and or payment of services through USDOL.

4.3 Legal Agreement Restrictions

[This section describes any restrictions on using the agreements such as they can only be used when a State of Emergency under the Stafford Act has been declared.]

4.4 Requesting/Assisting State Instructions and Procedures

This includes guidance, step by step procedures, and completion checklist for EMAC and other agreements.

We should include some “things to consider” in the MUE Toolkit guidance/checklists for states that are contemplating having another state scan their documents such as:

- Provisions to insure confidentiality throughout the entire process (shipping documents to be scanned, scanning, and returning or shredding scanned documents)

- Procedures to prevent commingling requesting and assisting states documents
- A tracking and marking system to prevent “double scanning or working” documents

4.4.1 How to Request and Respond to Assistance Requests

This section will include data flow diagrams for EMAC and USDOL agreement communications.

4.4.2 How Requesting and Assisting States Will Communicate and Interact

4.5 *Categorized Summary of Available Resources*

This will include individual and pre-packaged groups of services with a description of what they typically include. Every effort will be made to develop descriptions that are consistent across all the states.

4.5.1 Preliminary Cost Estimation Tool

This section will include a description and instructions for Bob Wagner’s preliminary cost estimator that will be available on the MUE Toolkit website.

4.5.2 Pricing Template

This will include all the things to take into consideration when developing a price for goods or services.

4.6 *Pre-defined Service Package Templates*

These templates will include sample descriptions of the most likely services to be requested and provided such as call center agents, adjudicators, and claims taking support.

4.7 *Assistance Request Template*

A complete description of the specific service being requested or offered describing exactly what they include such as duty statements, durations, travel costs, working limitations, and administrative fees among other items and how they will be provided.

4.7.1 Standard Descriptions of UI Job Classifications

Standard descriptions of the knowledge, skills, and aptitudes required for the most likely support personnel a state might request such as adjudicators and hearing officers, claim-takers, and call center agents to ensure the state is requesting the right people and the assisting state is providing the right people regardless of what each state calls them (e.g. customer service representative, agent, call center agent, etc.).

4.8 Real-Time On-Demand Pricing Guidance

This includes instructions, checklists and spreadsheet templates to help you state setup a system to quickly and accurately price the services your state is offering to provide. This will also include such considerations as budget cycles, economic conditions, union contracts and in-state/out-of-state service delivery among others.

4.9 Statement of Work Template(s)

This is the second tier of the agreement. It is completed and approved for each instance of assistance. It will include the following:

4.9.1 Services Requested

The services requested will be those services in the Service Request Template that the requesting state wants to procure from a particular assisting state.

4.9.2 Services Provided

The services provided will be the assisting state's response to the requested services.

4.9.3 Reporting Requirements

This includes assisting states providing periodic progress reports on work performed, funds expended, and irregularities to the requesting state and appropriate UI reporting to USDOL for both states.

4.9.4 Agreements

This section describes what the assisting and requesting states agree to. It may include changes or clarifications to the request or response such as a different number of personnel or the working times among others.

4.10 State Approvals Template

This is the signature page of the agreement.

4.11 Maintain Interstate Legal Agreements

We have to determine the right approach to requesting the states to review these legal agreements periodically to insure the mechanisms to execute them are still current. Contracts have performance durations, laws change, processes might change with administrations, etc. Is this a checklist unto itself or is it a line item on a higher level checklist?

We should look into how EMAC maintains its agreements for possible guidance.

5 MUE SIMULATIONS AND DISASTER RESPONSES

5.1 Simulation and Exercise Guidelines

5.2 Simulation Scenarios

This will include sample MUE situations that may be used as models for each state's simulations.

5.3 Simulation MUE Coordinating Procedures

Policies and Procedures for Coordinating MUE Interactions between UI Agencies, EMAC, and State EOCs or Requesting and Assisting States

5.4 Collection/Reporting Requirements

This will be added as an additional deliverable out of the legal agreements used for simulations.

5.4.1 Feedback Instruments

For collecting historical and lessons learned information from simulated and real disasters.

5.4.2 MUE Response Evaluation

Preparedness, Response, and Recovery Activities require Reporting and Evaluation to Determine Effectiveness and Measure Improvement
Feedback Instruments

5.4.3 Report On MUE Response and Recovery Activities

5.4.4 Capture Evaluation of Disasters and Disaster Simulations

5.4.5 Capture Lessons Learned from Simulations and Exercises

5.4.6 Develop Lessons Learned

5.5 Lessons Learned/Update Template

5.5.1 Update MUE Guidance Checklists, Processes and Procedures with Lessons Learned from Simulations and Exercises

GLOSSARY

This is a sample of the MUE Attachment - Disclaimer. SAMPLE TEXT: This document is part of a larger set of documents comprising the findings and requirements determined through an analysis of the MUE Toolkit. This document will probably require referencing one or more of the other documents such as the Glossary, Concept of Operations, or other referenced documentation for complete understanding.

ATTACHMENT I: GLOSSARY

Acronym	Definition
DRC	Disaster Recovery Center (FEMA term)
EMAC	Emergency Management Assistance Compact
EO	Emergency Operations
EOC	Emergency Operations Center
FCO	Federal Coordinating Officer (FEMA term)
FEMA	Federal Emergency management Agency
MUE	Mass Unemployment Event
RO	Regional Office
UI	Unemployment Insurance
USDOL	United States Department of Labor
UIPL	Unemployment Insurance Program Letter