

Unemployment Insurance Navigators Implementation Study: Design Report

August 18, 2023

Karen Needels, Briana Starks, Marina Gorzig, Kristen Joyce, and Jillian Berk

Submitted to:

Monica Mean
Chief Evaluation Office
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Policy
U.S. Department of Labor
200 Constitution Ave NW
Washington, DC 20210

Submitted by:

Mathematica
1100 First Street, NE, 12th Floor
Washington, DC 20002-4221
Phone: (202) 484-9220
Fax: (202) 863-1763

This report was prepared for the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), Chief Evaluation Office (CEO) by Mathematica, under contract number 1605DC-18-A-0020. The views expressed are those of the authors and should not be attributed to DOL, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement of same by the U.S. Government.

This page has been left blank for double-sided copying.

Contents

I.	Introduction	2
A.	Navigators in the workforce system	2
B.	Overview of the UI Navigator grants	4
C.	Conceptual framework for the evaluation	9
II.	Implementation Study	12
A.	Research questions	12
B.	Data sources	13
1.	Program document reviews	15
2.	Site visits	15
3.	Participant interviews	19
C.	Analysis approach	25
1.	Program document reviews	25
2.	Qualitative data from the site visits and participant interviews	25
3.	Navigator survey	27
D.	Limitations and approaches to mitigating challenges	29
1.	Reach of implementation data collection	29
2.	Limited quantitative data on Navigator participants	29
3.	Analyzing implementation data	30
III.	Feasibility Assessment of an Impact Study	32
A.	Feasibility considerations	32
B.	Impact study designs for community-level services	35
Randomized controlled trial	35	
Quasi-experimental designs	36	
C.	Impact study designs evaluating one-on-one interventions	36
D.	Next steps to assess feasibility	37
IV.	Reporting	40
	References	42
	Appendix A UI Navigators Implementation Study Research Questions	A.1

Appendix B Topic Guide for Interviews with Grant Administrators, Subgrant Administrators, and Navigators B.1

Appendix C Navigator Activity Observation Guide..... C.1

Appendix D Topic Guide for Navigator Participant Interviews D.1

Appendix E Survey Topic Guide for Navigators..... E.1

Appendix F Navigator Reporting Tool.....F.1

Tables

I.1	Outreach and individual navigation services in the Navigator Reporting Tool	5
I.2	Characteristics of grantee plans near the start of the UI Navigator grants.....	6
II.1	Data collection approaches to answer the research questions	13
II.2	Site visit topic, by respondent	18
II.3	Topics addressed in Navigator survey	20
A.1	UI Navigators Implementation Study research questions	A.3
B.1	Site visit topics, by respondent.....	B.3

Exhibits

I.1	Conceptual framework of Unemployment Insurance Workforce Navigation	10
II.1	Data collection timeline	14

This page has been left blank for double-sided copying.

I. Introduction

A central goal of the Unemployment Insurance (UI) system is to provide temporary income support to workers who lose jobs through no fault of their own. Inequities in access to the UI program and low reciprocity rates of UI benefits by workers who are eligible for these benefits are detrimental to both workers experiencing unemployment who are not receiving income support to which they are entitled, and local communities hit hard by economic disruptions or chronic unemployment (Wandner and Stettner 2000). Historically, workers experiencing unemployment in racial and ethnic minority groups have had lower reciprocity rates than others (Kuka and Stuart 2021; Gould-Werth and Shaefer 2012). Given the evidence about potential reasons for this pattern, such as perceived ineligibility (Wandner and Stettner 2000; Kenyon et al. 2003; Needels et al. 2000), efforts to increase UI program awareness and access among these groups might be effective at addressing inequities in benefits access and boosting reciprocity rates. Social services and income support programs, including workforce programs, disability services, and community colleges, have looked to “Navigators” to reduce these barriers to access and promote better outcomes for participants (Di Biase and Mochel 2021).

In June 2022, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) awarded \$18 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to seven state UI agencies in Maine, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Washington, and Wisconsin as UI Navigator grants to increase equity in access to UI benefits and services. In conjunction with community-based partners serving as subgrantees, the grantees’ efforts are to focus on potential claimants who are identified through personal, geographic, and work characteristics and who belong to groups that have been historically underserved, marginalized, and adversely affected by persistent poverty and inequality (Employment and Training Administration 2022). Within the context of the UI program, equity means the provision of UI benefits to UI-eligible workers in a timely and fair manner and in a way that uses a readily accessible and unbiased method for identity proofing (Hanks 2022).

In this report, we present the design of the UI Navigators Implementation Study, which is one of the components of the Navigator Study Portfolio Project being conducted by Mathematica and its partners Social Policy Research Associates and Needels Consulting, LLC. We begin by describing evidence about the potential for Navigators to help address barriers to accessing workforce program benefits and services, including those for the UI system; a description of the planned populations of interest for and main activities of grant recipients; a conceptual framework for the UI Navigator grants; and an overview of the UI Navigators Implementation Study, focusing on its research questions (Section I). Next, we describe the study’s data collection plans (Section II) and analysis plans (Section III). We also explain our approach to assessing the feasibility of conducting an impact study of the UI Navigator grants (Section IV), and we close by describing our reporting plans (Section V).

A. Navigators in the workforce system

In addition to barriers to accessing benefits and defending one’s rights, lack of awareness of benefits and rights have been found to be particularly pronounced among workers with low wages and those in racial and ethnic minority groups (Shaefer 2010; Kuka and Stuart 2021). Many low-wage workers experiencing unemployment assume they are ineligible for UI benefits ([Shaefer 2010](#)). A recent analysis of UI benefit take-up over the past 30 years found that, among individuals who appear to be eligible for UI benefits, Black individuals were 24 percent less likely to receive those benefits than White individuals ([Kuka and Stuart 2021](#)). According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, almost 75 percent of workers experiencing

unemployment who worked in the past 12 months reported in a survey that they did not file for unemployment benefits, and the majority of those who did not apply (55 percent) did not do so because they thought they were ineligible (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2023).

These disparities are partly driven by the administrative burdens associated with accessing these benefits. Scholars have categorized these burdens as learning costs, compliance costs, and psychological costs (Herd and Moynihan 2018). Examples of administrative burdens for UI that we have learned about from grantees include confusing program rules that leave workers experiencing unemployment uncertain about their eligibility, notices available only in English legalese, lengthy application processes that include multistep identity verification, stigma about benefit receipt, and concern about inadvertent UI overpayments or tax liabilities.

Navigators hold potential for improving access and equity

Using Navigators to help eligible people receive the benefits they are entitled to could be a solution to these access and equity problems and aligns directly with [Executive Order 13985](#), which seeks to promote the equitable delivery of government benefits by identifying and addressing barriers that underserved communities face to accessing them (Executive Order No. 13,985 2021).

Navigators have been used in different settings across the workforce system. Disability Program Navigators have been used successfully in American Job Centers (AJCs) to link people with disabilities to employment resources and make AJCs more accessible (Livermore and Colman 2010). As of March 2023, at least nine Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) programs use Navigators, an approach pioneered in Oregon in 2015, to help connect eligible workers to TAA services and on-the-job training opportunities (see WorkforceGPS 2023 for more information about the Oregon approach). Employment counselors in AJCs provide career navigation services, such as labor market information and guidance on careers and the training needed to succeed (Anderson and McConnell 2020). Some TAA Community College and Career Training grantees used Navigators to guide students and connect them with needed resources to support college completion and employment outcomes (Scott et al. 2020).

As part of the workforce system, Navigators might be well positioned to help support workers with low wages and from racial and ethnic minority groups in accessing programs, benefits, and protections.

- **They are connected to the community and the workforce system.** Navigators can straddle the lines between government agencies and the community. Often Navigators are hired by community-based organizations that are entities known to and trusted by the community with deep knowledge of the populations they serve. The Navigators are also trained in or have experience with the government programs they help promote. In some programs, the Navigators may be employed by government agencies but have strong connections in the community.
- **They can be strategically placed in and hired to connect with marginalized communities.** Navigators can be hired from and deployed to communities that need additional information and support to access programs and benefits. Organizations and staff can be hired that are trusted within the community to help inform eligible individuals of available benefits. For example, the use of “trusted messengers” was an effective strategy in encouraging community members to receive the COVID-19 vaccine (AuYoung et al. 2022).
- **They can serve a dual mission of supporting individuals and supporting systemic change.** Navigators can play various roles, but they most often help applicants and recipients access and engage in programs (Di Biase and Mochel 2021). However, they can also support systemic change in

programs and benefit systems by providing feedback to agencies from the community perspective about the challenges applicants and recipients face (Scott et al. 2020). Relatedly, some Navigators train agency staff about the need and challenges of populations of interest, such as people with disabilities (Livermore and Colman 2010). UI Navigators may be able to support states engaged in “tiger team” processes to improve the efficiency and accuracy of UI payments by identifying business process reform like plain language in key forms or web pages.¹

Despite the potential of Navigator services to increase access to benefits, services, and worker protections, there is little rigorous evidence about what works in UI Navigator services and for whom.

B. Overview of the UI Navigator grants

Of the \$18 million in UI Navigator grant funding awarded to seven states, six states (Maine, New Mexico, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Washington, and Wisconsin) received about \$3 million each, and one state (Oklahoma) received about \$227,000 (see Table I.2). During the three-year grant period, the grantees and their subgrantee partners have flexibility in whom they reach out to and how they provide services. Activities could include community outreach, group meetings with potential claimants, and one-on-one assistance with the UI claims-filing. The grantees also are expected to request and take action on regular reports from their subgrantee partners about the barriers to more equitable access to the UI program and potential strategies to overcome those barriers. Grant-generated improvements in equity and reciprocity could pertain both to benefit receipt and payment timeliness, as well as avoidance of biases in fraud mitigation efforts.

As a condition of grant award, grantees must adhere to several requirements as outlined in Unemployment Insurance Program Letter No. 11-22 (Employment and Training Administration 2022):

- On a quarterly basis, they are to provide DOL with three types of documents:
 1. Narrative descriptions of the implementation of each grant project (“quarterly progress reports,” or QPRs, using Form ETA 9178-ARPA), as well as related financial reports
 2. Any relevant studies, reports, findings, or audits
 3. The Navigator Reporting Tool, which is a spreadsheet in which grantees report to DOL both the number of outreach activities and the number of individual navigation services provided to people with specific characteristics.² See Table I.1 for more information on services tracked in the tool.
- Cooperate in the UI Navigators Implementation Study and an impact study should DOL choose to sponsor one
- Participate with DOL in equity data analytics activities

¹ Within the UI context, “tiger teams” are multidisciplinary teams that conduct a comprehensive review and analysis of a state’s UI system. Their goal is to make recommendations to reduce the incidence of fraud through better prevention and detection, to boost equity, and to foster more timely benefit payments.

² The Navigator Reporting Tool includes 16 different types of personal characteristics, including (but not limited to) those related to age, sex, race or ethnicity, educational attainment, earnings capacity, geographic location, access to and skill level with digital technology, veteran status, sexual orientation, former incarceration status, housing status, and disability status.

Table I.1. Outreach and individual navigation services in the Navigator Reporting Tool

Outreach to potential claimants	Individual navigation services to claimants
Online/web postings	Filing an initial claim
Social media	Adjudication and fact finding
Webinars	Weekly certification
Leaflets and brochures	Completing work search
Call center or phone banking	Appeals (i.e., filing or attending a hearing)
In-person group informational sessions	Overpayments (i.e., applying for a waiver)
In-person one-on-one assistance	Reemployment
Other	Identity verification
	Other

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Unemployment Insurance. Navigator Reporting Tool for Community-Based Organizations and States.

Table I.2 summarizes the populations each grantee state is focusing on and the strategies they are planning to use to reduce systemic barriers to accessing UI benefits. Each state will be partnering with one or more community-based organizations to provide outreach, education, and UI claim-filing assistance. Although each state is distinct, many states are focusing on populations with limited English proficiency, Indigenous workers, rural workers, Black and Hispanic or Latinx workers, immigrant workers, and refugee workers. Grantees plan to train partner staff, including Navigators, about the UI program and have included plans for a feedback loop from partner staff about the barriers that potential claimants from the populations of interest face so that the grantee can identify potential strategies to reduce or eliminate those barriers. Common approaches that Navigators will use to promote equitable access to UI benefits, as described in the grant applications, include attending community events to promote awareness of the UI program to certain groups, such as those that are historically underrepresented in the UI system, providing one-on-one assistance, and translating documents and providing interpretation services.

Table I.2. Characteristics of grantee plans near the start of the UI Navigator grants

Grantee (Amount of funding)	Number of partners ^a	Expected number of navigators	Populations addressed	Main grant activities and strategies ^b
Maine (\$2,997,237)	5	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People with low income • Older workers • Immigrants • Union members • Laid-off and low-wage workers • Refugees, asylee, and asylum seeker communities • Native American tribal members • People living in rural areas with barriers to accessing technology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canvass door-to-door, hold phone bank and texting programs • Deploy digital and social media outreach • Distribute leaflets in more than one language • Provide one-on-one assistance • Host educational events to reduce confusion about eligibility and increase understanding about workers' rights • Create and maintain feedback loop from partners to the state UI agency
New Mexico (\$2,801,230)	1, hoping to add 1 or more	TBD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • American Indian tribes and pueblos • People living in rural areas, especially those with limited internet access 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Translate UI materials into Spanish and local Indigenous languages • Hold community events to increase awareness about UI and workers' rights; capitalize on local activities that lead to a congregation of individuals belonging to groups that are underrepresented within the UI system • Provide one-on-one assistance, such as education and facilitating conversations with UI staff • Lead or provide translation and interpretation services for individuals • Translate materials into other languages • Train community partner staff • Create and maintain feedback loop from partners to the state UI agency
Oklahoma (\$227,038)	1	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People of color • People with low income without a car or internet access 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place Navigators in a grocery store to do in-person outreach • Provide one-on-one assistance, such as education and facilitating conversations with UI staff • Train community partner staff • Create and maintain feedback loop from partners to the state UI agency

UI Navigators Design Report

Grantee (Amount of funding)	Number of partners ^a	Expected number of navigators	Populations addressed	Main grant activities and strategies ^b
Oregon ^c (\$3,000,000)	To be determined	TBD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People with limited English proficiency • Immigrants and refugees • People of color • People with disabilities • Young adults • People living in rural areas • People with low income 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold community events to increase awareness about the UI program; capitalize on local activities that lead to a congregation of individuals belonging to groups that are underrepresented within the UI system • Provide one-on-one assistance, such as education and facilitating conversations with UI staff • Train community partner staff
Pennsylvania (\$3,000,000)	7	TBD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People with limited English proficiency in the two largest urban centers (including refugees and other immigrants) • People with low income and barriers to accessing technology (including service industry workers, workers of color, and women workers) • People living in rural areas • People with intellectual disabilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold community events to increase awareness about the UI program; capitalize on local activities that lead to a congregation of individuals belonging to groups that are underrepresented within the UI system • Provide one-on-one assistance, such as education and facilitating conversations with UI staff • Lead or provide translation and interpretation services for individuals • Translate materials into other languages • Train community partner staff • Provide feedback loop to state UI agency
Washington (\$3,000,000)	2, hoping to add 3-6 more	TBD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People with limited English proficiency • People with limited digital proficiency • Low-wage workers • People with disabilities • Workers of color • Members of religious minorities • LGBTQI+ persons • Women • Formerly incarcerated workers • People living in rural areas • Veterans • People without stable housing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold community events to increase awareness about the UI program; capitalize on local activities that lead to a congregation of individuals belonging to groups that are underrepresented within the UI system • Provide one-on-one assistance, such as education and facilitating conversations with UI staff • Lead or provide translation and interpretation services for individuals • Translate materials into other languages • Train community partner staff • Provide feedback loop to state UI agency

Grantee (Amount of funding)	Number of partners ^a	Expected number of navigators	Populations addressed	Main grant activities and strategies ^b
Wisconsin (\$3,000,000)	1	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Migrant and seasonal farmworkers • People with limited English proficiency, especially Spanish speakers • People with low income • Black, Hispanic or Latinx, Native American, and other people of color • People living in rural areas • People living in urban areas such as Milwaukee, Racine/Kenosha, the Fox Valley area, and Green Bay • People with limited internet access 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct outreach through in-person canvassing • Focus on language access, especially (but possibly not exclusively) Spanish-speaking • Provide one-on-one assistance, such as education and facilitating conversations with UI staff • Lead or provide translation and interpretation services for individuals • Translate materials into other languages • Provide feedback loop to state UI agency

Source: Information comes from a review of state applications for UI Navigator grant funding submitted to the U.S. Department of Labor during spring 2022 and discussions with grantee staff during December 2022 and January 2023. The discussions lasted about one hour each, included one to five grantee staff, and clarified details about states' UI Navigator grant plans.

^a The number of partners is current as of winter 2022/2023.

^b Many of the grant activities will be conducted by Navigators. Some activities will be conducted by other subgrantee staff, grantee staff, or a combination of different types of staff.

^c Oregon originally anticipated being able to work with subgrantees using a partnership with another state agency. However, state staff realized they must go through a competitive procurement process to identify subgrantees. Information about populations and activities is based on the original plans; these may change through the competitive procurement process.

LGBTQIA+ = lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual, and related identities; UI = unemployment insurance.

C. Conceptual framework for the evaluation

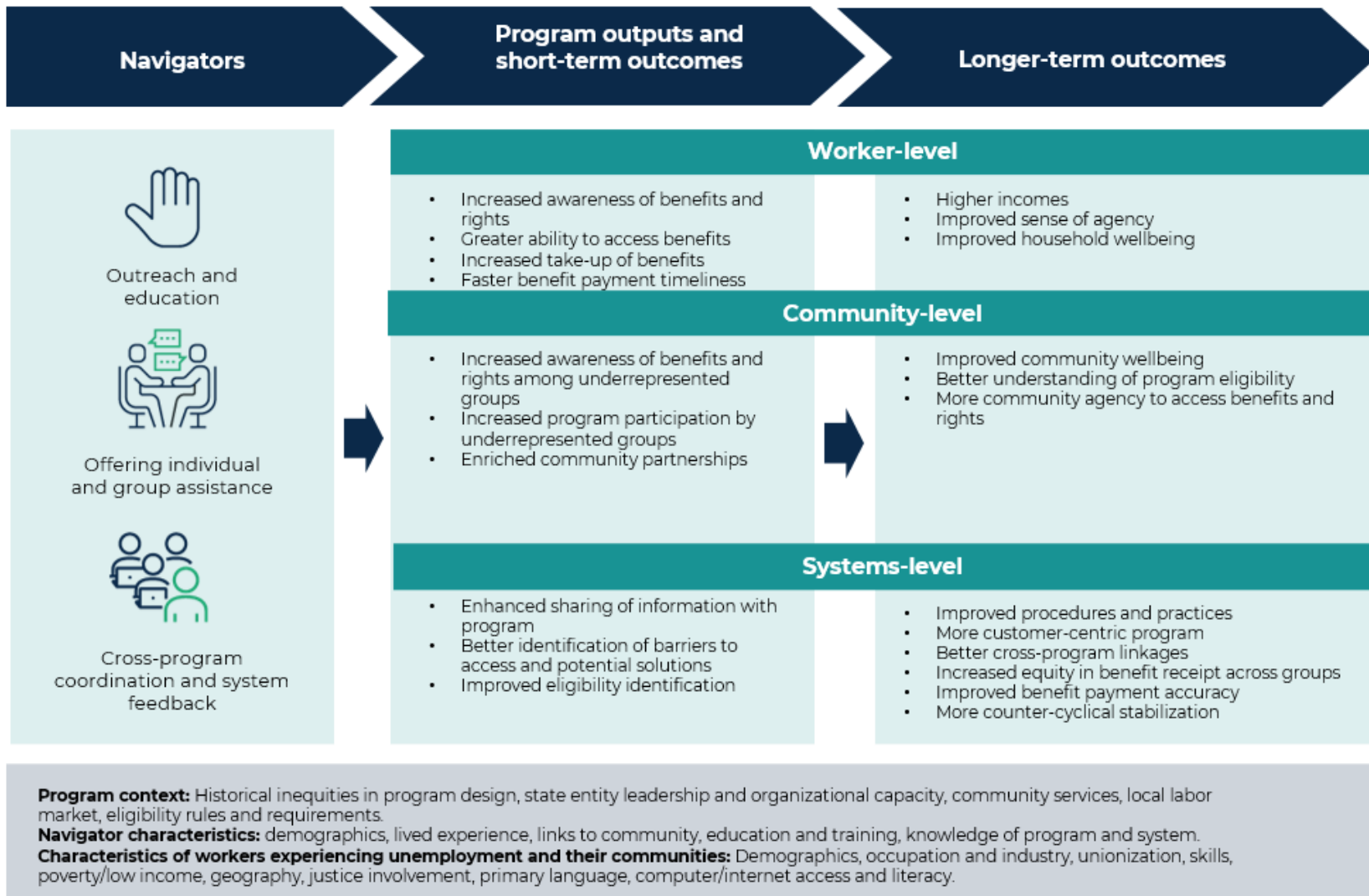
We are using a conceptual framework to underpin the design, data collection, and analysis activities that are part of the UI Navigators Implementation Study (Exhibit I.1). Our framework for workforce navigation includes three broad Navigator activities—conducting outreach and education, offering individual and group assistance, and supporting cross-program coordination and system feedback. Navigation services have the potential to influence short- and longer-term outcomes for workers, the community, and the state-specific UI system and policy environment. The framework includes several factors likely to influence services and outcomes, including program context (such as historical inequities in program design, program eligibility rules and requirements, and local labor market characteristics) and Navigator, worker, and community characteristics.

Potential claimants. For the potential claimant, we expect navigation will increase awareness and access to benefits and rights and benefit uptake and will lead to higher incomes and improved household well-being.

Community. At the community level, Navigators can increase awareness of benefits and rights among underrepresented groups, program participation by those groups, agency to access benefits and rights, and community well-being.

Systems. At the systems level, Navigators can share information with programs, identify barriers to access and identify potential solutions, improve eligibility identification and cross-program linkages, and help programs improve procedures and practices and become more customer-centric.

Exhibit I.1. Conceptual framework of Unemployment Insurance Workforce Navigation



This page has been left blank for double-sided copying.

II. Implementation Study

A. Research questions

Through collecting and analyzing qualitative and quantitative data, the UI Navigators Implementation Study will answer the following high-level research questions:

- What is the underlying need for navigation? What are the characteristics, needs, and barriers of the populations served by Navigators? What are their barriers to accessing UI, including state-level systems barriers?
- What are the core components of the Navigator model? What are the roles and responsibilities of Navigators?
- What are the partnerships in the Navigator model? What are the characteristics of the organizations that offer navigation services (for example, connections with the community, their structure, history of working with workforce agencies)?
- How was the Navigator model implemented? What challenges did grantees report facing when implementing navigation services? What strategies did they use to overcome them? What challenges do grantees perceive at the state-level for adopting navigation services?
- How are Navigators trained for their role? Who is providing the navigation services? What are the characteristics, skills, knowledge, and experience of Navigators?
- How do Navigators promote equity in access to UI benefits? What are potential claimants' experiences with Navigators? To what extent do staff and potential claimants perceive that Navigators help remove barriers accessing the UI program?
- What are perceived promising Navigator strategies?

Appendix A contains a detailed list of the UI Navigators Implementation Study research questions that, taken together, provide a road map to answer the questions above. Table II.1 maps the research questions to our planned data collection approaches.

The study is also examining two questions related to the feasibility of conducting an impact study of UI Navigator grant activities (see Section III):

- Which specific Navigator components, services, and approaches would be most valuable to focus on for an impact study?
- What feasible and appealing design options exist for an impact study of the UI Navigators program?

The UI Navigators Implementation Study fits into a portfolio to build evidence on Navigator approaches within the workforce system. Evaluation designs, data collection, analysis, and dissemination will be closely coordinated across all projects in the Navigator Evidence-Building Portfolio to ensure that we are developing foundational evidence about the core components of navigation to inform future efforts across the workforce system. The Portfolio project work will also be informed by the insights and experiences of a Peer Navigator Expert Group³, which includes six Navigator representatives from the Navigator

³ The Peer Navigator Expert Group was formed to help inform our study and elevate the voice of workers in our evaluation. We asked for nominations from other experts and community organizations of potential participants that had (1) current or recent experience working as a navigator in one of the programs being evaluated, (2) experience receiving program services, and (3) interest in improving workforce programs.

programs being evaluated, and a technical working group of six members, including researchers, UI policy experts, and UI claimant advocates.

B. Data sources

The design and data collection for the UI Navigator Implementation Study will focus on understanding *who* Navigators are and whom they serve, *what* they do, *how* they interact with the claimants and potential claimants they support, and *why* navigation is necessary. Multiple data collection approaches will ensure that our analysis reflects different perspectives.

Our data collection design is informed by organizational case study methods, per Yin (2014), in which the complexities of programs, their contexts, and changes over time can be captured, and focuses on gathering detailed, multi-perspective information from grantee staff and subgrantee staff partners. Our site selection methodology, data collection tools, and analysis plans are also informed by our reviews of the seven UI Navigator grant applications and clarifying calls with all the grantees, as described in Section II.C.

Our plans to answer the research questions described in Section II.A include collecting and analyzing data from qualitative and quantitative sources. Table II.1 maps the high-level research questions with our data collection approaches, which we describe in detail below.

Table II.1. Data collection approaches to answer the research questions

Research question	Qualitative data				Quantitative data		
	Program document reviews	Site visit interviews ^a	Navigator and participant observations	Participant interviews	Survey of Navigators	Participant data ^b	Publicly available data ^b
What is the underlying need for navigation?	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓
What are the core components of the Navigator model?	✓	✓	✓		✓		
What are the partnerships in the Navigator model?	✓	✓			✓		
How was the Navigator model implemented?	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
How are Navigators trained for their role?	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
How do Navigators promote equity in access to UI benefits?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
What are perceived promising Navigator strategies?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	

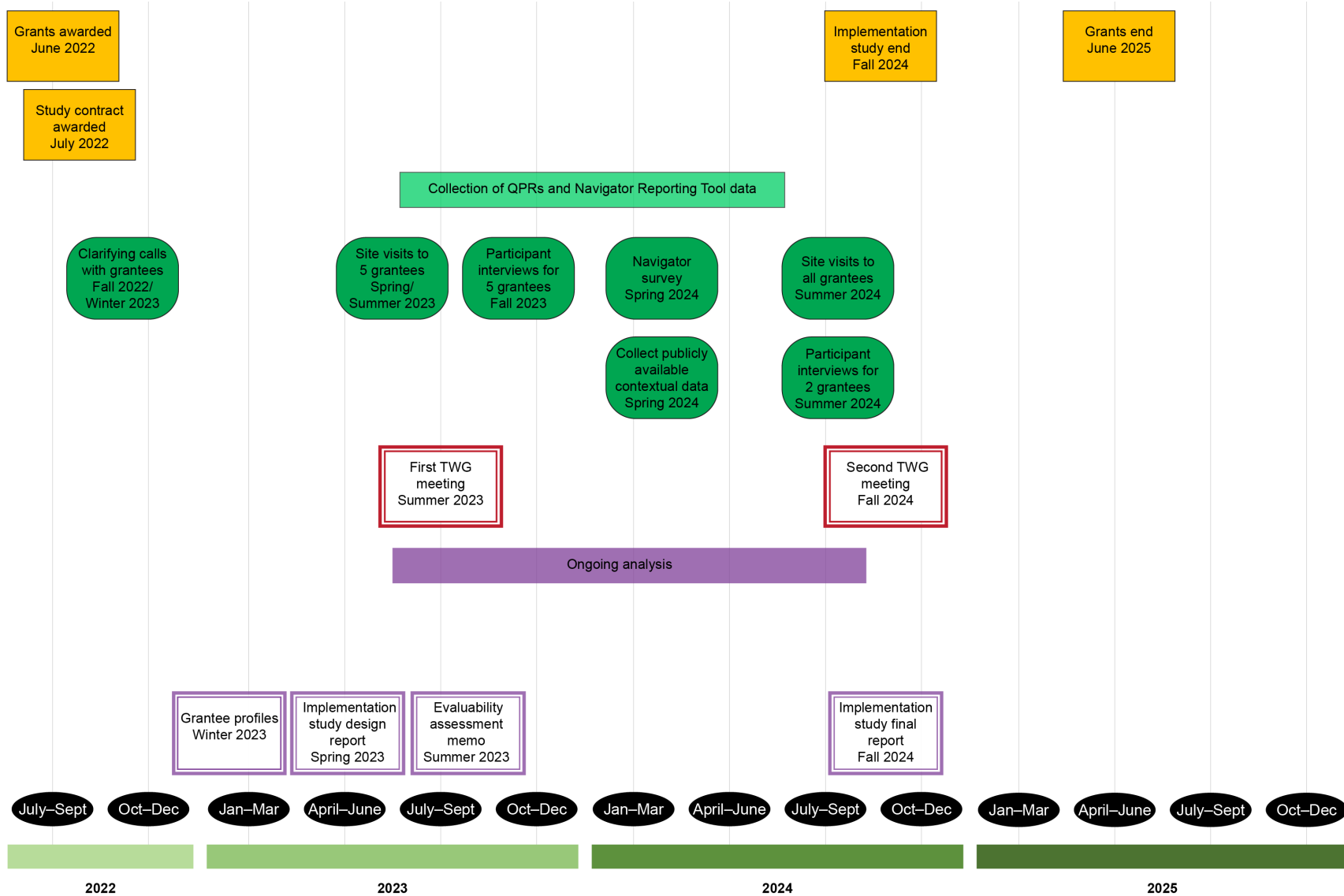
Note: The research question in each row represents the collection of research questions shown in the list of research questions in Section II.A.

^aThe study will conduct site visit interviews with grantee staff, subgrantee staff, and Navigators.

^b Participant data for those that have received outreach or support from a Navigator will be obtained from grantees and subgrantees, as available and possible. Publicly available data will be obtained from government websites.

Exhibit II.1 provides a high-level overview of the timing of the UI Navigators implementation study, including the specific data collection activities. The timeline might change depending on grantee and subgrantee needs.

Exhibit II.1. UI Navigators implementation study timeline



QPRs = quarterly progress reports. TWG = technical working group.

As the evaluation progresses, we will coordinate closely with DOL to assess the best timing for each of the data collection activities. An important factor determining this timing will be grantees' progress in implementing grant activities. Based on preliminary information gathered through the fall 2022 and winter 2023 clarifying calls with grantees, we anticipate staggering data collection across the grantees. It is likely that site visit data collection activities for two of the grantees, Oregon and Washington, will begin about one year after the comparable activities for the other five grantees because both states' grant implementation has been delayed. Furthermore, we will determine the details of the administrative data collection, including its timing, in conjunction with DOL after conducting the first-round site visits to five states during spring/summer 2023. Additional information about the timing of different data collection activities, including the rationale for it, is provided below.

1. Program document reviews

We have already conducted an in-depth review of UI Navigator grant applications to collect key information about each grantee. Using a standardized data collection template, we extracted information about each grantee's context and program model, including number of involved partners, topics and policies addressed, Navigator strategies identified, estimated number of claimants and potential claimants to be served, and geographic area served. The grant application review was systematic to ensure we collected consistent and comprehensive information across grantees and helped us identify any gaps in information about Navigator models in particular grantees that we then addressed during calls with grantees in fall 2022 and winter 2023.

In addition to the grant application review, we will collect and analyze the QPRs that grantees provide to DOL. The QPRs, which contain grantee-level information, will provide accounts of each grantee's progress implementing the grant, including any barriers they have faced in implementation and solutions the grantees have used to resolve those barriers. The QPRs also provide details about the Navigators. We will ask DOL to provide the QPRs at three points. Our review of these documents at the first two points will occur before site visits to grantees, and the third and final review will occur when we are preparing to submit our final evaluation report to DOL.

We also will review program documents, such as outreach materials, as available, that we collect during site visits and other communications with grantees and subgrantees. This review will illustrate the type of information Navigators are sharing and tools they are using in their interactions with claimants and potential claimants. It is likely that these documents will vary considerably across grantees and subgrantees, with different purposes, formats, and languages, and therefore our review will not be systematic across grantees. We will use the information from our review to inform our site visit data collection and to provide examples of how navigation is being implemented in our reporting. Our analysis approach of these documents is described in Section II.C.

2. Site visits

Overview of the site visit data collection effort

Site visits with grantees and subgrantees are a vital component of our planned data collection efforts and serve dual purposes. First, they will enable us to collect rich qualitative data via (1) in-person interviews with grantee and subgrantee staff, including Navigators, and (2) observations of Navigators and those whom they are serving. Second, by developing relationships with administrators and Navigators, we will be able to conduct other data collection efforts efficiently and with cultural sensitivity. For example, using

the Navigators' knowledge of the populations they work with will enable us to reach out to Navigator participants (those that have received outreach or support from a Navigator) in a culturally appropriate way for in-depth interviews.

In total, we will conduct 12 multiple-day site visits to grantees and conduct semi-structured interviews with UI administrators and subgrantee partner staff about their experiences implementing UI Navigator services. Two or three study team members will conduct each visit, with the senior site visitor leading the interviewing process and the junior site visitor(s) taking notes—and, in some cases, observing interactions between Navigators and Navigator participants.

The following text box shows the number of site visits we will conduct for each grantee and describes activities during the visits.

Site visit data collection

Number of visits per grantee

- Two rounds (about 12 and 24 months into grant periods) for five grantees (Maine, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin)
- One site visit for two remaining grantees with a delayed start to grant activities (Oregon and Washington)

Data collection activities while on-site

- Interviews with administrators at the UI state agency and up to three subgrantees per grantee
- One-on-one or group interviews with Navigators
- Structured observations of Navigator interactions with Navigator participants

- **Round 1 site visits.** For the five states that we will visit twice, we will conduct the first round of visits about 12 months after the start of the grant period. The goals of these visits are to:
 - Document the entities that are partnering to support the implementation and delivery of services
 - Describe the program model design, as well as implementation and deviations from the planned processes
 - Describe how grantees are putting the components of the UI Navigators program into practice
 - Identify factors that hindered and helped service delivery
 - Explore the feasibility of and options for an impact study
 - Develop rapport in support of other data collection activities
- **Rounds 2 site visits.** The second round of site visits to these five grantees will occur about 24 months after the start of the grants, when we expect service delivery to be relatively stable. The goals of these visits are to:
 - Describe changes made to the program model and implementation since the first site visit
 - Assess fidelity to the program model
 - Identify challenges faced and successes in overcoming the challenges
 - Learn about plans for sustaining program activities after the end of the grant

In Oregon and Washington, we plan to conduct only one round of site visits. This is because these grantees reported during the fall 2022 and winter 2023 clarifying calls that they expected significant delays in implementing their grant plans—possibly up to one year. During 2023 and early 2024, we will periodically touch base with these two grantees to determine the appropriate time for us to conduct the site visits. Regardless of the timing, the basic structure of the visits and the topics to be covered will be comparable to those covered during the visits to the other five grantees, although we will not be able to collect information in as great a depth.

Site visit scheduling

Before each site visit, our team will work closely with grantees to identify dates for the visit and the schedule for the interviews and observations. We will be flexible in scheduling the visits to reduce the burden on grantee and subgrantee staff, while ensuring we collect the necessary information for the evaluation. Ultimately, the schedule for each site visit will be distinctive, given the number of subgrantees to visit, their geographic distance from each other, and other considerations.

Site visits will be between two and four days and will begin with a visit to UI state agency staff (typically in the state capital) for the first day of the visit, followed by visits with up to three subgrantees depending on the geographic dispersion of grantees and subgrantees. We will collaborate with grantees to determine which subgrantees we will visit based on the following:

1. Importance of each subgrantee to the grantee's overall activities
2. Variation across the subgrantees within a grantee to ensure we visit subgrantees working with diverse populations of interest
3. The distinctiveness of a subgrantee's service delivery approach
4. Logistical considerations such as distance from the state capital, language and translation needs, and the robustness of activities

We will visit the same subgrantees during both grantee site visits to help us understand the changes they have made to their projects as implementation progressed.

Site visit interviews

We anticipate conducting semi-structured one-on-one or small group interviews with 15 to 20 staff during each site visit—possibly three to five administrators at the state level and an average of six staff at each subgrantee, with a mix of both Navigators and subgrantee administrators. Table II.2 displays the topics we will discuss by respondent type. A topic guide for the site visit interviews is in Appendix B.

During interviews, study team members will assure respondents that their responses will be kept private and will inform individual respondents that (1) their participation is voluntary, (2) they can decline to answer any questions that they prefer not to answer, and (3) the study team will use all the responses for research purposes only. In addition, we will work with the Health Media Lab Institutional Review Board (IRB) to ensure that our data collection procedures adhere to ethical standards for the treatment of human subjects.

Table II.2. Site visit topic, by respondent

Topics	Respondents			
	Grant administrator	Subgrantee administrator	Navigator supervisors	Navigators
Context and structure of state’s UI program	✓			
Background on UI Navigator model and grantee interest in equity data analytics activities	✓			
Subgrantee partnerships	✓	✓		
Subgrantee organization and culture		✓	✓	
Community context	✓	✓		✓
Subgrantee administrative structure and staffing		✓	✓	✓
Navigator training and supervision	✓		✓	✓
Program implementation	✓	✓	✓	✓
Data collection and participant outcomes	✓	✓	✓	✓
Impact study feasibility/evaluability assessment	✓	✓	✓	✓
Successes and challenges	✓	✓	✓	✓
Enhancements to, expansion of, or continuation of Navigator positions	✓	✓		

Should we find during the site visit planning period or while on-site that we will be unable to meet with one or more staff who have information of high value to the study (such as if a planned interviewee is sick on the day of our visit), we will schedule a follow-up phone interview to collect the desired information. However, we do not anticipate needing to do this often.

Before the start of the site visit data collection effort, we will create a standardized write-up template to compile all site visit data in a systematic format. Write-ups will summarize information collected during the site visit interviews and observations from each grantee. This will help us code the data for analysis, as discussed in Section II.C. We will train site visitors in how to summarize information in the write-up template and one team member will review all write-ups for consistency in the information and level of detail included.

Site visit observations

During the site visits, the study team will observe Navigator services and activities, such as outreach and education sessions or Navigators’ one-on-one meetings with claimants and potential claimants. The observations of selected activities will enable us to better understand how Navigators spend their time and whether activities are being implemented as designed. We will use a semi-structured observation guide to assess the implementation of core navigation activities covered including outreach and education, one-on-one assistance, and program feedback efforts (see Appendix C). We will use the guide to record our notes during the observations and will not video or audio record the observations. We will observe activities as scheduling allows, and site visitors will split up as needed at each location to ensure they can conduct both observations and interviews as planned. Before conducting observations of Navigator and Navigator participant interactions, we will ask for and obtain verbal consent from the staff and participants being observed, following the script included in Appendix C, as approved by the IRB.

3. Navigator participant interviews

The study team will conduct up to 45 total virtual, one-on-one interviews with Navigator participants across the seven grantees about two to three months after the first visits to each of the seven grantees. These interviews will occur during fall 2023 following our summer 2023 site visits at the five grantees that we will visit twice (Maine, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin) and during late summer 2024 for the two grantees (Oregon and Washington) that we will visit only once during summer 2024. During our site visits, we will ask the grantees and subgrantees for recommendations on how best to identify participants for these interviews.

Focusing on the subgrantees that we spent time with during the site visits, we will work with grantees and subgrantees to identify a non-representative, purposeful sample of 10 to 15 Navigator participants per grantee to reach out to for an interview, with a goal of completing five to seven interviews per grantee. In states where we visit two or three subgrantees, we will aim to evenly divide the number of interviews across the subgrantees to complete about two or three interviews per subgrantee. We will request that grantees and subgrantees identify participants for the study team to interview, who are diverse and reflective of their populations of interest. We will not have access to demographic administrative data to inform the sample. Navigator participants we intend to interview will have some level of engagement with UI Navigators depending on the service delivery model (for example, attending an educational workshop about the UI program or one-on-one engagement with a Navigator). We will determine what the service delivery model is at each subgrantee during the site visits and then we will define the level of Navigator engagement we will use for participant interview selection. At the end of the interview, each participant will receive \$45 for participating.

The Navigator participant interviews will provide insight into:

- Participants' backgrounds, including current or previous experience receiving UI benefits
- Extent of their involvement with Navigator services and their reasons for wanting assistance from a Navigator to access the UI program
- Prior experiences with the UI program and any barriers they have faced in accessing its benefits
- How they became aware of Navigator services, their expectations of the Navigator services, and (if applicable) their experience applying for UI benefits and navigating the UI program requirements
- Types of Navigator activities and services they have received
- Length, frequency, and intensity of engagement with Navigator staff
- Referrals to other programs or supportive services they have received from Navigators
- Challenges they faced when accessing Navigator services
- Experiences, activities, or referrals that have been most helpful in decreasing barriers and increasing access to UI benefits

The topic guide for the Navigator participant interviews is in Appendix D. To ensure clarity and appropriateness of interview questions, we will coordinate with one of the grantees from the summer 2023 site visits to identify two or three participants to pilot the interview. Following this pilot, we will refine the protocol and finalize for the remaining interviews.

One interviewer will conduct each participant interview. When it is appropriate to conduct a participant interview in a language other than English or Spanish, we will use a vendor called [LanguageLine](#)

[Solutions](#) for a live translation of the questions and responses over the phone or through a web platform. We will record the interviews, with permission, and transcribe them instead of taking notes during the discussion. We will use a third-party transcription service to transcribe the interviews and translate the transcripts into English, as needed. We describe our analysis approach for these interviews in Section II.C. We discuss the limitations to this data collection approach in Section II.D.

4. Navigator survey

Survey design and topics

The interviews conducted with Navigators during the site visits will yield valuable insight into their background and experiences. However, we might not interview all Navigators at the subgrantees we visit, and we plan to visit a subset of all subgrantees. Thus, to attempt to collect data on all Navigators across all subgrantee sites, we will field an online survey of Navigators after the first round of site visits.

In this survey, we will collect information from Navigators about a range of topics via a web-based survey using Confirmit that Navigators can easily respond to on their phone or computer. To design the survey, we will draw on insights gained from several data sources, including the review of grant applications, first-round site visits, and the Navigator participant interviews—as well as our experiences designing and conducting surveys of similar types of staff in other contexts, including a survey of career navigators in adult education programs (Institute of Education Sciences 2023). We also will work with the Peer Navigator Expert Group to ensure we are accurately capturing the important elements of Navigators’ experiences through brainstorming meetings to define navigation in the workforce system and potentially having the group review survey questions. We will also seek input on the survey topics and questions from the TWG. The IRB will review the full survey before fielding. A list of the survey topics is in Table II.3. A more detailed topic guide for this survey is available in Appendix E. We developed the list of topics based on our review of the grant announcement and grant applications, and through conversations with DOL to determine their priorities for the study (Employment and Training Administration 2022).

Table II.3. Topics addressed in Navigator survey

Navigator background
Navigator training
Navigator activities
Feedback for program improvement
Addressing barriers populations face in accessing UI benefits
Demographics

Source: Appendix E; Survey Topic Guide for Navigators

Note: These topics represent the primary factors to be explored through the Navigator survey.

Our goal is for the survey to take about 20 minutes for Navigators to complete. We will pre-test the survey using a Word version, with directions to follow skip logic, to identify any confusing or unclear items and to make sure the projected time is accurate before programming the survey. We will recruit nine participants for the pre-test, offering them \$45 in compensation. When the survey is programmed, we will also test it to ensure it is performing properly, and test survey dissemination materials, including to ensure emails sent match the intended recipient and the survey link is correct and functional.

Because it is likely that most Navigators speak English or Spanish, we will create and disseminate the survey in those two languages. During the first round of site visits, we will assess if limiting the survey to these two languages will present barriers to participation; if it does, we will consider whether to translate the survey into additional languages using a third-party translator.

Survey recruitment and timing

We will attempt to recruit Navigators working in that role during early 2024 to take the survey. During our winter 2023 clarifying calls with grantees, we learned that most grantees intend to have one to nine Navigators; one grantee intended to train a minimum of 65 Navigators, and two grantees did not know the number of intended Navigators (see Table I.2). Although we currently do not know the total number of Navigators to be part of the survey data collection effort, it is likely 80 to 100. Because some grantees will have fewer than 10 Navigators, it might be possible to identify an individual's responses in the data. We will communicate to Navigators that we will not publish any statistics that would publicly identify any individual. In processing the survey data for analysis, we will remove personal identifiers (including names and contact information) from responses and assign respondents unique numerical identifiers to de-identify responses. We will also remove the names of the Navigators' subgrantee organizations and assign unique numerical identifiers for the organizations as well to further anonymize responses.

There are several considerations in the timing for fielding this survey. First, five of the seven grantees began their work quickly after grants were awarded during summer 2022, whereas two expected to be delayed by about one year. Second, even among the grantees that were not delayed, there is substantial variation in when Navigators will begin their work because some grantees will be adding subgrantee partners over the course of the grant. Additionally, some subgrantees were planning to hire new employees to serve as Navigators, and other subgrantees were planning to use grant funds to pay current employees who will take on a new UI Navigator role.

To accommodate different grantee timelines and subgrantee hiring processes while still efficiently fielding the survey and collecting comparable data across grantees, we will survey Navigators in spring 2024. We expect by this time all grantees and subgrantees will have begun implementing their activities and most Navigators will have started in their role. Although data from the different grantees will not be perfectly comparable (for example, some grantees will have more experienced Navigators than others), this approach will be an efficient way to gather similar data across grantees and subgrantees that differ substantially in their timing.

During early 2024, we will request the following from grantees: (1) the information necessary for us to recruit Navigators for the survey and (2) support to facilitate a high response rate to the survey. Specifically, we will ask grantees for the work email and mailing addresses for the current Navigators, that we will store in a secure, restricted electronic folder. (During 2023, we will notify both those grantees that we will visit during summer 2023 and those that we will not visit until summer 2024 of our request.) When implementing the survey, we will send an email one week in advance informing the Navigators about the survey and then the email with the survey link. We will have the survey in the field for six weeks, sending a reminder email to nonrespondents after two weeks and weekly after that point. We will also mail a letter to Navigators introducing the survey and providing their individual survey link and a quick response (QR) code that will also link directly to their survey. We will also mail a reminder postcard with a QR code and survey URL approximately three weeks into the fielding window. Furthermore, to help legitimize and bring attention to the survey emails, we will also ask the grantee and subgrantee staff to email the Navigators informing them of the survey request using a template we

provide. We will not provide a monetary incentive for Navigators to complete the survey because their cooperation with study activities is part of their responsibilities as staff working on the grant.

Based on our experience with similar surveys, including the Adult Education career navigator survey that has a 98 percent response rate, we expect a response rate of at least 85 percent to provide adequate coverage for analysis and reduce nonresponse bias (Institute of Education Sciences 2023). In addition to our direct encouragements to Navigators to complete the survey, we will work with grantees to determine the best approach for follow-up to achieve this response rate. These approaches may include requests that grantees either send general encouragement to all subgrantees or Navigators.

5. Aggregate and individual-level data

In addition to the qualitative data collected through program document reviews, site visits, and Navigator participant interviews, and the quantitative data collected through the Navigator survey, aggregate and individual-level quantitative data about claimants and potential claimants will be extremely valuable for answering research questions about the characteristics and outcomes of the Navigator participants. We will use three main quantitative data sources about claimants and potential claimants: (1) Navigator Reporting Tool data; (2) individual-level data on Navigator participants, as available; and (3) publicly available data.

The primary quantitative data source will be the Navigator Reporting Tool. DOL created this tool in Excel, and grantees are using it on a quarterly basis to report to DOL aggregate information on the number of Navigator participants and their demographic characteristics. Appendix F provides more information about the contents of the tool.

Some grantees and subgrantees are also collecting individual-level data on Navigator participants. However, these data may be challenging to collect in a consistent manner across grantees and subgrantees because DOL does not require grantees to collect it and grantees are not collecting the data systematically. We plan to explore the potential value and hurdles in collecting and analyzing these data. We will also explore linking individual-level Navigator participant data to administrative data about UI claims, although this will depend on subgrantees' ability to collect personally identifying information (PII) on participants. If collecting and analyzing individual-level participant data and administrative data is possible and desirable, we will work with DOL and the grantees and subgrantees, as needed, to develop data sharing agreements and data management policies and procedures before obtaining the data.

Finally, we plan to use publicly available data from the Census Household Pulse Survey⁴, the Current Population Survey⁵, and Employment and Training Administration (ETA) reports to describe the broader context of workers' characteristics and UI program performance in grantee states.

⁴ The Census Household Pulse Survey is a rapid response survey that began during the COVID-19 pandemic to measure household experiences and includes data on household demographics, including sexual orientation and gender identity, and employment. For more information, the survey's technical documentation is available on Census.gov: <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/household-pulse-survey/technical-documentation.html>

⁵ The Current Population Survey collects data monthly from 60,000 households on the status of the labor force, unemployment, and other labor force and demographic characteristics. For more information, the survey's technical documentation is available on Census.gov: <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/cps/technical-documentation/complete.html>

Participant characteristics and outcome data

Subgrantees and grantees vary in the extent to which they will be collecting information on the claimants and potential claimants who interact with or receive services from Navigators. During our winter 2023 clarifying calls, three grantees reported that they and their subgrantee partners had not yet finalized plans for the subgrantees to collect individual-level information. However, it is likely that at least some subgrantees will be collecting data at the individual level for one-on-one activities (for example, phone calls to speak to a Navigator to get assistance with a UI claim) and aggregate data for group activities (such as informational sessions). These data might include self-identification with different underserved groups, race and ethnicity, education level, gender, current UI claim or benefit receipt status, and reason(s) for the interaction with a Navigator. Depending on the activities Navigators engage in, subgrantees may collect both aggregate data and individual data that are then aggregated by the subgrantee or grantee to be reported quarterly to DOL through the Navigator Reporting Tool.

Some grantees and subgrantees also may attempt to collect PII such as Social Security numbers (SSNs) from Navigator participants. However, these identifying data will likely not be universally collected. During clarifying calls, two grantees reported that their subgrantees are not able to or are reluctant to collect any information that would identify Navigator participants. Factors that will influence this include the populations served, the types of activities the subgrantees are engaged in, and the relationships between Navigator participants and the subgrantees. During the summer 2023 site visits, we will explore when and how subgrantees are collecting data about Navigator participants, what data are collected at the individual level, and when the data are aggregated. If collecting and analyzing individual-level participant data and administrative data is possible and desirable, we will work with DOL and the grantees and subgrantees, as needed, to develop data sharing agreements and data management policies and procedures before obtaining the data.

Linking to administrative data about UI claims

For situations in which PII, and particularly SSNs, are available for Navigator participants, two options exist for linking those participant data to administrative data about UI claims activities:

- 1. State administrative data.** Because the UI Navigator grantees administer their state's UI program, they have access to very detailed information about UI claims. The data typically include information about the presence of a UI initial claim, whether a claimant who filed an initial claim was eligible for benefits, how long it took to make a first payment (for claimants who were eligible to receive one), appeal status, and the amount of benefits paid. The collection and analysis of these detailed data would enable us to answer equity questions about UI benefit receipt. In particular, we could use the data to learn whether Navigator participants filed UI initial claims and, if so, how they progressed through the UI system and their speed in doing so.
- 2. National Directory of New Hires (NDNH).** State UI agencies also report information on new hires, quarterly wages, and quarterly UI benefits to the Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) within the Office of the Administration for Children and Families (ACF). OCSE then compiles these data into a federal NDNH data set. Though child support agencies are the primary users of NDNH data, a partnership between DOL and ACF enables study teams under contract with DOL to request extracts of the data that include PII for linking. There are two advantages to using this data set for an analysis of the UI claims activities of Navigator participants (for whom adequate PII is available): (1) the data are standardized across all states and (2) only one application process and data use agreement would be required. However, a drawback is that the UI data are significantly less detailed than state

administrative data about UI program activities; we would be able to observe only whether a Navigator participant received UI benefits during a calendar quarter and the dollar amount of those benefits. We would be unable to observe the more detailed information about UI claims activities, including whether Navigator participants filed UI initial claims but were denied, whether they appealed, and the length of time for the UI agency to process the first payment.

The relative advantages of each data source about UI claims will depend partly on the proportion of Navigator participants for whom PII is available. For example, if most subgrantees collect the SSNs of a high proportion of participants, it might be more efficient to use the NDNH data, thus avoiding multiple state-specific data agreements and allowing for a standardized analysis across states. However, if only a few subgrantees collect SSNs or other PII that would enable us to link participants to administrative data, it might be more desirable to request detailed UI program data from those specific states. This would enable us to do an in-depth analysis of the UI process in those states—identifying where leakages and clogs in the claims-filing process occur for different populations and how Navigators responded to these challenges. If no state collects PII on a high proportion of Navigator participants, linking participants to either state or federal data may be infeasible. As we conduct site visits during summer 2023 to five of the seven grantees, we will gather more information about the subgrantees' data collection practices and the types of linking that might be possible.

In the evaluability assessment memo, we will provide to DOL in August 2023 (described in Section III), we will describe our findings about the likely availability of PII about Navigator participants, the options for collecting individual-level administrative data and analyzing the data, and the potential for generating insights from the analysis. We also will discuss potential benefits and risks of different data collection approaches. Furthermore, we will discuss other considerations related to the potential data collection effort, such as the timing of when each data source could become available, when it could be analyzed, and which UI program measures would be most desirable to focus on. In this memo, we will make a recommendation to DOL for how to proceed.

Contextual data on claimants and potential claimants' characteristics and UI program performance

To compare the populations the grantees reach and the potential communities who would benefit from Navigator services, we will use two population-representative publicly available data sources that provide publicly available aggregate data about populations of interest. First, we will use the Census Household Pulse Survey, one of the few population-representative data sets that collect both unemployment information and information on LGBTQIA+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual, and related identities) identity. This is an important data source to analyze for those grantees, including Washington, that are focused on decreasing barriers for the LGBTQIA+ populations to access the UI program among other populations. Although the Census Household Pulse Survey has information on the LGBTQIA+ population, it does not collect detailed geographical information (for example, urban or rural areas or specific counties), which reduces the usefulness for some research questions. In addition to the LGBTQIA+ population, the Pulse Survey also collects information on age, race and ethnicity, education level, household income, and functioning and disability, that could be used for grantees focused on decreasing barriers for related groups. For those grantees that are focusing on specific geographic areas, for example, increasing access to UI in rural areas or in urban centers of the states, the Current Population Survey might have more detailed information. As appropriate for grantees' specific populations of interest, we will use one or both data sets to assess the extent to which participants are different from the broader unemployed population within each grantee state on characteristics of interest.

We will also gather data reported by state UI agencies to DOL to provide contextual information about each grantee's UI program. These reports are publicly available on DOL's website and provide information aggregated to the state level. For example, we will examine the monthly ETA 5159 data about initial claims, first payments, continued weeks claimed, and weeks and dollars compensated. We also will collect the monthly ETA 9050 data about first payment time lapse and the ETA 203 data about the characteristics of UI claimants. With these data, we will gain contextual insights about some basic measures of the UI program that grantees' Navigator efforts are intended to address.

C. Analysis approach

Relying on the data sources described previously, the implementation analysis will describe UI Navigator grant services and partnerships; barriers and facilitators to implementation, as identified by respondents; and successes and challenges that grantees and subgrantees experienced. We will use a variety of approaches and tools to combine, organize, and analyze information from the multiple sources of data collected for the study. When possible, we will triangulate data across respondents and sources to strengthen the reliability of the findings, for example, using accounts from staff, accounts from participants, and quantitative data, as available, to back up a specific finding.

1. Program document reviews

As discussed in Section II.B, we will review and analyze several types of program documents over the course of the UI Navigators Implementation Study. We have already reviewed the grant applications and held clarifying calls with the grantees about their grant plans.

Going forward, we will review for each grantee the QPRs and document information about grant activities, milestones, deliverables, challenges faced, and grantee strategies for overcoming those challenges. To the extent possible before conducting site visits, we will review the QPRs to help prepare for our interviews and tailor our interview protocols as necessary to probe on details and issues identified in the reports. We will then code and analyze the QPRs using the same process as the other qualitative data sources described below.

For other program documents collected from grantees and subgrantees, such as outreach materials, we will review the content of the documents to help inform our understanding of Navigator activities and the types of information Navigators are sharing with claimants and potential claimants. To the extent possible, we will compare Navigators' reports of what they are doing with what is described in the documents. Also, to the extent possible, we will have staff fluent in other languages, such as Spanish, review translated documents to assess the translation quality and relevance of the messaging in comparison to English versions of the documents. These staff will read the documents and assess whether the messages conveyed in the documents are the same in the translated versions and note areas of discrepancy between the English and translated versions.

2. Qualitative data from the site visits and Navigator participant interviews

To analyze the qualitative data from the site visit interviews and observations and the Navigator participant interviews, we will use reductive coding based on the conceptual framework and thematic exploration of strategies, barriers, and facilitators in implementation. Reductive coding places large chunks of text into a defined set of related categories so related data can be viewed and themes explored.

The 12 site visits to the seven grantees and the 45 virtual participant interviews will produce a large volume of raw data to be coded for the study. We will use reductive coding to systematically describe states' implementation progress and form the basis for detailed answers to the research questions within and across each grantee. The reductive coding approach will make it possible to consistently and efficiently organize extensive and detailed data across grantees and subgrantees. Another benefit of this approach is that the coded data can be queried in various ways depending on the research question. Thus, as questions about the implementation of the UI Navigators Grants evolve with our analysis, we can examine the data again from different angles.

Our reductive coding effort will be guided by a codebook based on the conceptual framework shown in Exhibit I.1 and organized around the key domains of interest. To capture the diversity and dynamics of the key planning and implementation drivers at play in the UI Navigator grants, the codebook will account for the interconnectedness of implementation factors across domains and across qualitative data sources (interview respondents and observations) by allowing multiple codes on the same text. The codebook will contain all of the relevant constructs or topics of inquiry that are part of the study framework, the interviews, and the observations of interactions between Navigator participants and Navigators—such as partnerships and collaboration, outreach and education, offering group and individual assistance, cross-program coordination, and system feedback. It then groups those constructs into a manageable number of topics and subtopics. To guide coders, each protocol question will be linked to the codes most likely to be appropriate for that question.

To code the data, coders will review interview notes and transcripts, observation notes, QPRs and other program documents within the qualitative data analysis software NVivo and assign codes to chunks of data according to their relevance to predetermined codes in the codebook.

Training coders

We will train a team of coders to apply the constructs using the project-specific codebook during a two-hour long training. During training, lead coders will explain the codebook, answer questions, and then have the coders practice coding as a group to ensure consistency across one another. Each coder will receive the same write-up to code. The lead coder will then compare the results across coders, and the team will discuss areas of disagreement. The team will continue to code the same write-up until it has established a collective understanding of the codebook and constructs. The team will use NVivo to code all write-ups. A senior member of the study team will also oversee the coding process and conduct ongoing reliability checks to ensure consistent coding across team members by reviewing a sample of the transcripts and codes to check for accuracy.

Conducting the analysis

The cross-state, thematic analysis of strategies, barriers, and facilitators in implementation will be driven by the following topics relevant to the high-level research domains of the implementation study:

1. The characteristics and needs/barriers of the populations served by Navigators and the underlying need for navigation
2. The core components of the Navigator model
3. The key partnerships in the Navigator model and the characteristics of the organizations that offer navigation services

4. The roles and responsibilities of Navigators, as well as their training, skills, knowledge, and experience
5. The ways in which Navigators promote equity
6. Participants' experience with Navigators and the extent which Navigators help remove their barriers to accessing the UI program
7. Experiences with implementing the Navigator model, including challenges faced and strategies to overcome challenges
8. Potentially promising Navigator strategies

In our analysis, we will consider where each grantee was in its grant implementation timeline at the time of the site visit(s), as grantees will not be on the same timeline or conducting the same types of activities across subgrantees.

After we code the qualitative data, we will review code reports and develop analytic tables to identify qualitative themes. We will then examine the intersection of codes to develop analytic summaries of the data. Doing so will ensure that we identify distinctive features of the Navigator models and populations of interest that drive differences in implementation experiences. Additionally, analytic summaries will highlight the challenges identified by Navigators, Navigator participants, and grant administrators and the variety of potential solutions identified for those challenges. Finally, our analysis will yield valuable insight into the on-the-ground experience of those designing, delivering, and receiving navigation services to foster greater access to the UI program by underserved groups.

3. Navigator survey

Our analysis of the Navigator Survey data will enable us to answer study research questions about Navigators' lived experiences and training, as well as the number and type of activities in which they engaged and the number of participants they served. We will generate descriptive statistics from the survey data to describe Navigators' demographic profiles, including their race, ethnicity, languages spoken, and LGBTQIA+ identity. We will compare these profiles with the grantees' stated goals and focal groups to see the extent to which Navigators' lived experiences match those of the populations of interest. We will also analyze the self-reported percentages of time that Navigators spent in different activities and examine whether the time spent on activities varies with the Navigators' demographic characteristics and the focal groups for each subgrantee.

Potential exploratory extension: Linking Navigator and Navigator participant data

We will explore the potential to conduct an analysis based on linking Navigator survey data to Navigator participant data.

Through an analysis based on this data linkage, we could identify suggestive patterns about the role of Navigators' characteristics and experiences in overcoming barriers to UI program access faced by claimants and potential claimants. For example, we could examine whether Spanish-speaking Navigator participants who speak Spanish as their first language have a higher rate of filing a UI initial claim than do Spanish-speaking participants whose Navigators use an interpreter.

Even if we can link data from the two data sources, we might not have sufficient data to conduct the analysis or sufficient statistical power to draw useful conclusions. If we overcome these risks, the analysis could yield nuanced insight into how the Navigators program serves different groups of claimants and potential claimants.

4. Participant data and publicly available data

Participant data from the Navigator Reporting Tool that the grantees provide to DOL will be a primary source of data to address some of the research questions described in Section II.A. In particular, this information will provide insights about the characteristics of the Navigator participants, the barriers they face, and the steps in the UI claims-filing process when Navigators provided one-on-one assistance. After creating a descriptive demographic profile of participants, we will make three types of comparisons. First, we will assess how participant characteristics align with the demographic groups that grantees aimed to reach (information gathered through the grant applications, clarifying calls, and site visits); for example, we will learn whether a grantee intending to reach American Indian tribal communities had a high percentage of participants that are American Indian. Second, we will compare the profiles of participants to the profiles and lived experiences of Navigators (information gathered through the Navigator survey) to learn the extent to which Navigators and the people they serve share certain characteristics. Third, we will compare participant profiles to population-representative data on workers experiencing unemployment to see if the Navigator program is disproportionately serving members of marginalized groups relative to the unemployed population in their area.

Finally, we will examine aggregate data from states' reports about UI claims activities to DOL. We will document how UI program measures (such as the number of first payments and first payment time lapse) change after the implementation of the UI Navigators grant. This information would not provide causal insights about the effects of Navigator services, because many other aspects of state labor markets and UI programs will be changing at the same time. However, the patterns we detect will provide contextual insights about both cross-grantee

patterns and changes over time in the UI measures that Navigators are working to influence. We might also be able to compare the characteristics and UI measures for participants to state-level measures; for example, using the Navigator Reporting Tool and ETA 203 data, we could compare the percentages of all UI claimants within a state and grantee participants who have a specific demographic characteristic. The comparison will give us insight into the barriers to the UI benefits and the targeting of Navigator services. Additionally, we will be able to assess whether the UI program outcomes that grantees are targeting are relatively high or low compared to those in other states. For example, if a particular grantee state wants to improve timeliness in first payments or reduce a particular denial rate, we can compare these measures for that grantee to the same measures for other states.

Potential exploratory extension: Linking participant data and administrative data

We will explore the feasibility of linking individual-level participant information from grantees to a state's UI administrative data files. This link would enable us to identify whether participants file UI initial claims and, if they do, at what step participants leave the UI claims-filing process. Additionally, this link would potentially allow us to compare the gap between the UI claims-filing experiences of participants who are members of marginalized communities and those who are not. There is a high degree of uncertainty around what data grantees will provide and if we will be able to link these data to administrative data. This is an area we will explore in advance of the August 2023 impact study feasibility memo; if it appears feasible, we will evaluate potential approaches to analyzing linked data.

D. Limitations and approaches to mitigating challenges

The UI Navigator Implementation Study will have some limitations. Below we describe three groups of limitations and the study team's approach for mitigating them.

1. Reach of implementation data collection

Because two of the seven grantees are delayed in implementing their Navigator grants, we will only be able to complete one site visit with these two grantees. We plan to cover the same topics with these grantees as we will cover in the two site visits with the others. However, we will be unable to explore issues at the same depth given the time constraints of one visit. In addition, the number of subgrantees we will be able to visit at all grantee locations will be limited, and we will not be able to speak with staff from all subgrantees. Therefore, our findings will not be generalizable to all UI Navigator subgrantees.

Our data collection will cover only the first two years of the three-year grant period. Although we expect most grants to be in a steadier state by year two, we will be unable to capture additional changes made or new successes and challenges faced in the final grant year. Staff perspectives on the sustainability of the grants after the third year may also be limited during year two.

We drafted site visit topic guides aimed at collecting as much information as possible from staff during interviews. We will train interviewers to focus their questioning on the most important implementation topics relevant to each respondent and to try to solicit candid responses. However, respondents may be hesitant to honestly discuss sensitive topics, such as shortcomings of their grant plans or challenges they may have faced, due to a desire to portray their grant experience positively. To attempt to avoid this, we will frame our interviews as opportunities to share lessons learned, instead of grant monitoring. We will also keep this in mind as we analyze and report on our data and use caution when drawing conclusions.

We are limited in our ability to conduct site visit interviews in languages other than English and Spanish. However, we assume only a limited set of staff, if any, will be unable to complete interviews in English. If we discover there is a larger group of Navigators who do not speak English or Spanish, we will consider translating the Navigator survey into other languages to help gather this group's perspective.

Grantees and subgrantees will select the Navigator participants we interview and will represent a convenience sample. This sample will be a small non-representative group of participants from only a subset of the subgrantees. As a result, the data collected from the sample will not be generalizable to other participants served by those subgrantees or to the broader group of participants served by all subgrantees.

2. Limited quantitative data on Navigator participants

As part of the grants, UI Navigator grantees are required to submit aggregate-level data on Navigator service delivery and participant demographics. We anticipate that subgrantees might have difficulty collecting detailed demographic data on the claimants and potential claimants who are exposed to different Navigator outreach activities. During the site visits, we will seek to learn more about the data collection process used to generate the aggregate data so we can accurately describe aspects of Navigator services that are included in the data. We will also explore with the grantees whether individual-level data are available, but we expect the availability of these data to be limited. Without individual-level data, or with data from only a subset of grantees, we will be limited in the extent to which we can report on outcomes for Navigator participants.

3. Analyzing implementation data

Our analysis of implementation data largely collected through interviews will require the team to make some subjective interpretations. To strengthen our analysis, we will rely on multiple sources of data to develop our findings. Data sources will include perspectives from grantee and subgrantee administrators, Navigators and their supervisors, and Navigator participants. We note, however, that the perspectives gathered from the respondents will be anecdotal and not generalizable to all UI Navigator grantees or participants' experiences with the programs. We will also rely on program documents provided by the grantees and subgrantees, narrative information from the QPRs, and aggregate data from the Navigator Reporting Tool.

This page has been left blank for double-sided copying.

III. Feasibility Assessment of an Impact Study

The UI Navigator grants are intended to reduce systemic barriers that marginalized communities face when accessing UI benefits and to increase equity in UI benefit access. As such, we want to consider the perspectives of grantees, subgrantees, Navigators, and, potentially, workers who have experienced unemployment when we assess the feasibility of different types of designs for an impact study of the UI Navigator grants. Doing so will enable us to comprehensively learn about program model features, data availability, and any constraints on implementing an impact study.

The impact study feasibility assessment will address the following questions:

- Which specific Navigator components, services, and approaches would be most valuable to focus on for an impact study?
- What feasible and appealing design options exist for an impact study of the UI Navigators program?

As we consider options for an impact study of the UI Navigators grants, we will consider a wide range of designs that can provide evidence of the effects of the Navigator activities. We will assess whether different types of designs can provide insights about topics of interest to DOL and other stakeholders, the feasibility of the designs, and the burden of the designs on the marginalized communities the grantees and subgrantees are serving. We will consider both randomized controlled trials (RCTs) and quasi-experimental designs (QEDs). RCTs are the gold standard of impact studies because randomizing people into two groups—one with access to services (the “treatment group”) and one without such access (the “control group”)—ensures that there are no systematic differences between the groups before they access services. As a result, any difference in outcomes between the two groups can be directly attributed to the difference in access to the treatment services. However, it is not always feasible or ethical to randomly assign people to treatment and control groups, as discussed in Section III.B. QEDs identify other forms of variation in treatment service access or receipt to estimate the impact of service access.

Importantly, UI Navigators will engage in two main types of activities: (1) community-oriented (or group) interventions, such as providing information or translating documents; and (2) one-on-one assistance for claimants and potential claimants. These two types of activities have distinct feasibility considerations; therefore, we discuss two potential focuses of impact studies. We first focus on an evaluation of community-oriented interventions and then consider one focused on one-on-one interventions.

A. Feasibility considerations

In this section we describe the considerations that will affect our ability to conduct an impact study and our process for assessing feasibility for doing so.

A number of important theoretical considerations will affect our ability to conduct an impact study of both a community-oriented intervention and a one-on-one intervention. Because the UI Navigator grants focus on increasing equity, we include considerations drawn from the Culturally Responsive Equitable Evaluation framework (Anderson and Matri 2021) and considerations from standard impact evaluations.

The feasibility of an impact study that is of a high quality and conducted in an ethical way depends on the following considerations: (1) awareness of the context of the evaluation, (2) a study team that incorporates stakeholders’ perspectives, (3) data collection conducted in an inclusive and accessible way,

(4) ability to detect and measure impact, and (5) size of expected impact. For RCTs, a sixth consideration is present: feasibility of implementing random assignment.

Next, we describe why each of these considerations is important in the context of the UI Navigators program.

Awareness of the context of the evaluation. The context of an evaluation is essential for any impact study, but a potential impact study of UI Navigator grants poses particularly sensitive contextual concerns given that grant services are focused on marginalized communities that face significant barriers to accessing UI benefits (Skandalis et al. 2022; Kuka and Stuart 2021; Edwards 2020). Additionally, the specific evaluation design must be considered contextually. Historically, some researchers restricted access to widely available, likely beneficial resources among Black communities to evaluate the impact of those resources—these studies were deeply unethical and resulted in horrific outcomes for research participants (Freimuth et al. 2001; Jones 1992). As described in more detail below, some evaluation designs rely on randomly offering access to some or all UI Navigator grant services; these designs must be especially carefully considered in marginalized communities because of the social and historical context of this research design.

A study team that incorporates stakeholder perspectives. Including stakeholder perspectives on the study team increases the usefulness of an impact study by helping identify which programs and services are most valuable to community members, what outcome measures are meaningful, and what design processes reflect the communities' values. We will explore the feasibility of equitable evaluation methods that collaboratively design evaluation strategies with community members, the Peer Navigator Expert Group, and other stakeholders.

Data collection conducted in an inclusive and accessible way. Collecting and analyzing data from marginalized communities raises important ethical concerns. In the UI Navigator services, common populations of interest for the grantees include Spanish-speaking potential claimants, immigrants, and American Indian populations; these are groups where sharing data with government officials is fraught. Potential claimants in mixed-status families (where some family members have immigration documents and others do not) may fear that immigration officials will use a UI claim to locate family members without documentation (Vargas 2015). Furthermore, data sovereignty, where Tribal government agencies (and not the U.S. government or outside researchers) control relevant data, is of increasing importance among American Indian communities (National Congress of American Indians 2018). Historically, some non-Indigenous researchers have used data from American Indian, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, and other Indigenous communities predominantly in an extractive way, such as to publish papers, rather than collaboratively (Tammaro 2022), resulting in a lack of trust and hesitancy to participate in research.

Ability to detect and measure impact. Any impact study will require that we measure outcomes for people who have access to UI Navigator services and those who did not. To understand the contrast in service access between those in the two groups, we must be able to measure service receipt in both groups. It is also useful to collect information about potential recipients of UI Navigator services before they receive services, so that the study team can adjust for any differences in the pre-study characteristics of the two groups when estimating impacts.

Additionally, high-quality impact study designs require a sample size that is sufficient for detecting effects that are statistically significant and meaningful from a policy perspective. As we consider the feasibility of including grantees or subgrantees in an impact study, we will consider the types of activities the Navigators are engaging in and the number of expected participants in the activities during the time

for which enrollment in the impact study could occur. Because our sample size might be too small to estimate the impact of Navigator services at each subgrantee, pooling the information about participants from different grantees or subgrantees might initially seem appealing. However, doing so could cause problems when we interpret impact estimates because each subgrantee is implementing a different set of Navigator services and working with different populations of interest. As a result, it would be unclear what service package generated the estimated impacts, and we could conclude very little about either the policy implications from the impact analysis or the desired replicability if estimated impacts are favorable. Given sample size considerations, any impact study might be limited to subgrantees with large numbers of participants or subgrantees with similar enough interventions and populations that we are able to pool.

Size of expected impact. In general, we expect that good implementation of strong program models, which involve providing intensive and consistent services, is more likely than poor implementation of weak models (that is, those for which services are less intensive or inconsistently provided) to produce statistically detectable, policy-relevant impacts on participants' outcomes. During summer 2023 site visits, we will document factors that affect the strength of the Navigator model and fidelity to it during implementation, including the qualifications and experience of Navigators; the intensity of services provided; and grantees' ability to implement the model as planned.

In addition to having a strong program model, the size of the expected impact depends on what would have happened to recipients of UI Navigator services if those services had not been available (that is, the counterfactual). Because researchers cannot simultaneously allow treatment group members to have access to services and not allow them to have access to those services, impact study designs must rely on the experiences of other people to reflect the counterfactual. Studies in which the two groups of people have meaningfully different access to services are considered to have a strong counterfactual, whereas studies with such a meaningful difference are considered to have a weak counterfactual. As part of our assessment of the feasibility of each impact study design option, we will consider the availability of other services for those who do not receive Navigator services. For example, if Navigators are replicating similar services that are already abundantly available and easily accessible to claimants and potential claimants, there is little reason to believe that an impact study will show large impacts of access to Navigator services on participant outcomes.

Feasibility of implementing random assignment. RCTs randomly assign people into two groups—one with access to services (treatment group) and one without such access (control group); this ensures there are no systematic differences between the groups prior to service access. To randomize in this way, RCTs require two things. First, to randomize participants as described above, a study must first be able to identify potential participants. For example, if participants indicate interest in an event before it occurs, subgrantee staff could identify potential participants and randomly assign them into treatment and control groups.

Second, a program or service must be oversubscribed. This means that there are more interested individuals who are eligible to engage with a program or service than there is capacity of the program to serve them—for example, if more people sign up for an event than the subgrantee has capacity for. This oversubscription would allow the subgrantee to meet outreach targets while still having enough people to fill a control group for the impact estimation process to generate useful results. Additionally, without oversubscription, it would be unethical to arbitrarily withhold services that the program had capacity to provide.

B. Impact study designs for community-level services

Randomized controlled trial

There are several important considerations to consider when designing and implementing an RCT to estimate the impacts of community-level UI Navigator activities on claimants and potential claimants' access to the UI program and receipt of UI benefits.⁶ These include:

Subscription considerations. The grantees and subgrantees have been planning to conduct activities that boost access to information, including translating UI program materials into more languages or sharing information via social media or community outreach events. Although grantees and subgrantees are limited in the extent to which they can conduct these types of activities, the number of claimants and potential claimants who access the newly available information is not inherently limited. Artificially limiting access to resources that are available and likely to be helpful, particularly among marginalized communities and for an entitlement program, is unethical.

Issues with random assignment. Identifying all people who seek out Navigator services will be challenging; for example, it is not feasible to identify all people who observed a social media post with information or a translated version of a form, particularly if community members share information within their own networks. Without identifying those who seek out services, randomly assigning access to those services is challenging.

Measurement of service receipt and outcomes. There are two concerns with measuring service receipt and outcomes. First, UI claims activity depends in part on the local labor market conditions. For example, Navigators might successfully increase awareness of UI benefits and decrease barriers in the claims-filing process, but communities experiencing only a few job losses will have only a few UI initial claims, and measuring the outcomes of interest will be difficult.

Second, because the UI Navigator grants intend to serve marginalized communities, surveys of participants might have lower response rates or more limited data than would studies of the total population. In our winter 2023 clarifying calls with grantees, some grantees reported anticipating that their subgrantees will be unable or reluctant to collect PII from Navigator participants, such as through one-on-one or group meetings to promote awareness of the UI program. In the absence of PII for participants, it would be very challenging to collect sufficient data on service receipt and follow-up data on a large portion of participants to make an RCT feasible. It also would be challenging to collect information about the characteristics of the participants before the random assignment process (that is, baseline data), although these data are less critical for an impact study. Those for whom service receipt and outcome information (and possibly baseline information) is available might not be representative of everyone who has received Navigator services.

Sample size considerations and variability across grantees and subgrantees in the services offered.

As discussed in Section II, most grantees were unsure at the time of the clarifying calls the number of claimants and potential claimants their Navigators would be able to serve. Furthermore, the number of Navigator participants who provide PII to facilitate the availability of outcomes data might not be enough to meet a threshold that would enable the study to precisely detect an impact of the service or services through statistical analysis. As discussed earlier, pooling the data across grantees and subgrantees might

⁶ Theoretical and methodological considerations related to RCTs and QED methods, such as difference-in-differences and regression discontinuity design, discussed in Sections III.B and III.C can be found in Angrist and Pischke 2009.

be a valuable option, but only if we can identify sets of services being offered by subgrantees that are sufficiently similar to enable pooling of the participants from the different subgrantees. During our first-round site visit interviews during summer 2023, we will learn about the number of people receiving services and the potential for obtaining baseline and follow-up data on them.

Quasi-experimental designs

QEDs are alternatives to RCTs that rely on a form of variation in access to Navigator services that is not based on random assignment. A common type of QED is a difference-in-differences estimate. The difference-in-differences approach examines the change in the difference of an outcome between two or more groups before and after an event, such as implementation of a program. For example, if Wisconsin and Minnesota have similar populations, labor markets, and UI program features before the Navigator grant activities begin, the differences in claimants and potential claimants' access to and receipt of UI benefits might be small. After Navigator activities are implemented, we could examine the change in the difference in UI program measures between Minnesota (which did not receive a UI Navigator grant) and Wisconsin (which did receive a grant). We would use the changes over time in the difference in the measures between the two states as the estimates of the impacts of access to Navigator services. This first example of a difference-in-differences design uses location to create variation across two groups of claimants and potential claimants whose outcomes will be compared.

Besides variation in location, another potential source of variation could arise if there is a staggered rollout of the UI Navigator grant services. For example, some grantees planned to work with certain subgrantees initially before working with others that serve similar populations in different parts of the state. We might be able to compare outcomes between these two areas or subgrantees as services are rolled out; we would expect to see at least a small difference in outcomes before services begin at either. A bigger difference would likely appear when only one subgrantee is providing services, and then a narrowing of the difference when they both are. The difference-in-differences analysis would estimate the impact as the change in the difference that occurs when one subgrantee begins providing services and the other has not yet started. These designs could use data collected by the subgrantees, population-representative data about UI benefit receipt such as from the Current Population Survey, or other data on UI benefits.

The difference-in-differences method relies on some important assumptions. First, it is important to assess whether the groups have similar trends before the start of service delivery in the outcome measures; one way to meet this assumption is to use a synthetic control group created from a weighted sample of different groups that match the treatment group before the intervention. Second, it is important to consider whether other factors that could influence outcomes of interest have the same variation over time as the Navigator grant activities for which an impact is to be estimated through the difference-in-differences method; if other factors influence the levels or trends in the outcomes, it would be hard to attribute the estimated impact to access to the services under study.

C. Impact study designs evaluating one-on-one interventions

Many grantees will have Navigators offer one-on-one assistance to claimants and potential claimants. The QED methods described above would be less able to identify the impact of specific interventions because the QED methods use variation in time or geography to identify the impact of an intervention. Because the Navigators will be offering several different types of services, QED methods will be less able to identify the impact of one specific Navigator service. However, an RCT may be more feasible to assess

the impact of one-on-one assistance than to do so for community-oriented interventions because there is a greater potential for random assignment and oversubscription to one-on-one assistance.

Oversubscription may be more feasible for one-on-one interventions.

We may be able to identify specific aspects of one-on-one UI Navigator services that are oversubscribed—that is, there is more interest than the Navigators can meet. If this is true, we may be able to randomize who has access to that service. During the summer 2023 site visits, we will assess if subgrantees identify any aspects of the Navigator services as oversubscribed.

Potential for random assignment. If we can identify a Navigator service (or a set of services) that is oversubscribed, we will assess the feasibility of randomizing access to it. Feasibility will depend on the details and circumstances of the service; for example, it may be harder to randomize access to a phone call helping a claimant or potential claimant fill out a form than it would be to randomize access to a popular educational class with a limit on the number of people who can attend. In both cases, more people may want to use the service than Navigators are able to help, but in one it is easier to identify interest in advance and randomize access.

As mentioned in the previous section, we would still need to assess whether the study would meet other

considerations for an RCT. These include, but are not limited to, whether (1) we could collect data on treatment and control group members and (2) a sufficient study sample size is available. We will learn more about these issues during the summer 2023 site visits.

D. Next steps to assess feasibility

We will use the site visits in summer 2023 to explore the feasibility of the different types of design options for an impact study. We will include questions in our interview protocols to gather information about the types of activities that Navigators are engaged in. This will focus in particular on identifying

Potential exploratory extension: Regression discontinuity design (RDD)

An RDD can be used when there is some form of cutoff between those who have access to a program and those who do not, such as when a test score is used to determine eligibility for training. The estimate of the impact of access to the services is based on the difference in outcomes between those with scores above the cutoff and those with scores below the cutoff.

RDDs can be either “sharp” or “fuzzy”. Sharp RDDs require that the cutoff is strict whereas a fuzzy RDD only requires that the cutoff is related to access to services. Fuzzy RDDs apply to situations when having a score above or below the cutoff does not perfectly predict access to services—for example, when people above the cutoff have a higher probability of access to services and those below the cutoff have a lower probability of access to services.

In this instance, a geographic border may serve as a fuzzy RDD cutoff, because UI benefits are typically determined by the state where someone worked. Someone who lives in or near a state that received a UI Navigator grant is far more likely to have access to Navigator services because they are more likely to have worked in that state. So, the distance between a person’s residence to the border of a state with Navigator services is strongly, although not definitively, related to access to Navigator services.

We will explore potential data sources for this approach, including data from state UI systems, or publicly available data with geographic information beyond state of residence and information on UI benefits. This highly exploratory extension might be useful if we identify weaknesses in the difference-in-differences approach during the feasibility assessment that an RDD could address.

any aspects of Navigator services that are oversubscribed and which subgrantees could randomize access to one or more of its Navigator services. We will also discuss the procedures that the subgrantees are using to collect data from participants and gather initial information about the number and flow of participants served by subgrantees, the proportion of participants who are providing any data about themselves, and the proportion of participants who are providing enough PII to enable us to obtain data about their UI outcomes. Although grantees and subgrantees are required to participate in all activities for the UI Navigator Implementation Study, we also will assess the degree to which their staff are likely to cooperate with an impact study.

We will present our findings about the feasibility of conducting an impact study using different types of designs, discuss trade-offs with the designs, and provide recommendations to DOL in a memo in August 2023.

Stakeholder engagement

As part of our feasibility assessment process, we will seek input from the Technical Working Group that includes UI advocacy representatives, as well as the Peer Navigator Expert Group, which includes one Navigator with lived experience as a UI recipient. These perspectives will help guide the feasibility study. If feasible, we will also attempt to interview a few workers experiencing unemployment to inform the feasibility memo.

Should DOL exercise the option for us to conduct an impact study, our final impact design will collaboratively engage community-based partners, particularly in implementing any study that relies on randomizing access to services or collecting PII data. This engagement will include stakeholders with experience with the UI system and those from communities who face barriers to accessing UI benefits.

This page has been left blank for double-sided copying.

IV. Reporting

To help improve programs and services and to inform future research about Navigators within the workforce system, we will communicate findings from the UI Navigators Implementation Study quickly and effectively to DOL. The main components of our reporting plans are:

1. an impact study feasibility assessment memo that will describe whether an impact study of the UI Navigator grants is feasible and potential approaches for conducting one;
2. draft and final versions of the implementation study report, with a related briefing, that will describe our findings about how the grants were implemented, who was served by the Navigators, and what barriers claimants and potential claimants face to receiving UI benefits; and
3. a collection of short topic papers or briefings about specific topics of interest to DOL and other stakeholders. We will determine the topics for the special briefings and short papers in conjunction with DOL; examples can include (1) outreach methods that UI Navigators use, (2) common barriers to UI program access (such as language issues or distrust of government agencies) and strategies to overcome them, (3) approaches to train Navigators about UI program rules and responsibilities, and (4) strategies to provide feedback to the UI agencies about the barriers and “pain points” in the UI claims-filing process.

In all reporting, we will ensure the privacy of participants and Navigators; we will not publish any statistics that could identify any individual. All deliverables will be policy-focused and present results in a nontechnical fashion while maintaining the scientific integrity of the project’s findings. Reports will both reflect the Chief Evaluation Office’s standards on language bias and evaluation standards and follow procedures for a disclosure risk review. All final deliverables will be 508-compliant, and we will prepare the Notice of Forthcoming Report within five days of the contracting officer’s representative’s request.

We will coordinate the UI Navigators Implementation Study reporting plans with other dissemination activities within the Navigator Study Portfolio. The deliverables from the UI study will support the development of a research synthesis report that addresses common themes and lessons from the Portfolio and similar programs across workforce systems, with an intended audience of both policymakers and practitioners. We plan to structure the synthesis around the core components of Navigator programs, Navigator roles and responsibilities, and the characteristics of populations they serve.

This page has been left blank for double-sided copying.

References

- Anderson, M.A., and A. Mastri. “Culturally Responsive and Equitable Evaluation for Federal Evaluation Staff.” Cambridge, MA: Mathematica, July 2021.
<https://www.mathematica.org/publications/culturally-responsive-and-equitable-evaluation-for-federal-evaluation-staff>.
- Anderson, M.A., and S. McConnell. “Using Coaching and Navigation to Promote Economic Mobility: What is the Evidence?” Cambridge, MA: Mathematica, August 2020.
<https://www.mathematica.org/publications/using-coaching-and-navigation-to-promote-economic-mobility-what-is-the-evidence>.
- Angrist, J.D. and J. Pischke. *Mostly Harmless Econometrics: An Empiricist’s Companion*. Princeton University Press, 2009.
- AuYoung, M., P. Rodriguez Espinosa, Wt. Chen, P. Juturu, M.E. De Trinidad Young, A. Casillas, P. Adkins-Jackson, et al. “Addressing Racial/Ethnic Inequities in Vaccine Hesitancy and Uptake: Lessons Learned from the California Alliance Against COVID-19.” *Journal of Behavioral Medicine*, vol. 46, 2022, pp. 153–166. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10865-022-00284-8>.
- Di Biase, C., and M. Mochel. “Navigators in Social Service Delivery Settings: A Review of the Literature with Relevance to Workforce Development Programs.” Manhattan Strategy Group, U.S. Department of Labor, 2021.
https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/OASP/evaluation/pdf/NavigatorLitReview_20211203_508.pdf.
- Edwards, K. “The Racial Disparity in Unemployment Benefits.” RAND Corporation, July 15, 2020.
<https://www.rand.org/blog/2020/07/the-racial-disparity-in-unemployment-benefits.html>.
- Employment and Training Administration. “Unemployment Insurance Program Letter No. 11-22: Grant Opportunity for States to Participate in the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Unemployment Insurance (UI) Navigator Program.” U.S. Department of Labor, January 31, 2022.
- Executive Order No. 13,985. “Executive Order on Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government.” The White House, January 20, 2021.
<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2021/01/20/executive-order-advancing-racial-equity-and-support-for-underserved-communities-through-the-federal-government/>.
- Freimuth, V., S. Quinn, S. Thomas, G. Cole, E. Zook, and T. Duncan. “African Americans’ Views on Research and the Tuskegee Syphilis Study.” *Social Science & Medicine*, vol. 52, no. 5, March 2001, pp. 797–808. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0277-9536\(00\)00178-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0277-9536(00)00178-7).
- Gould-Werth, A., and H. L. Shaefer. “Unemployment Insurance participation by education and by race and ethnicity.” *Monthly Labor Review*, 135, pp. 28-41, October 2012.
- Hanks, A. “Grant Opportunity for States to Participate in the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Unemployment Insurance Navigator Program.” Unemployment Insurance Program Letter No. 11-22. U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, January 31, 2022.
https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/ETA/advisories/UIPL/2022/UIPL_11-22.pdf.
- Herd, P and D.P. Moynihan. *Administrative Burden: Policymaking by Other Means*. Russell Sage Foundation, 2018.

- Institute of Education Sciences. “Assessing Evidence of Effectiveness in Adult Education: Study of Career Navigator Training.” Available at: https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/projects/evaluation/pathways_evidence.asp. Accessed June 26, 2023.
- Jones, J.H. “The Tuskegee Legacy AIDS and the Black Community.” *The Hastings Center Report*, vol. 22, no. 6, 1992, pp. 38–40. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3562949>.
- Kenyon, R., K. Needels, T. Anderson, J. Gerding, and M. VanNoy. “Internet Initial Claims Evaluation.” U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration, HeiTech Services, Inc., October 10, 2003. https://www.doleta.gov/reports/searcheta/occ/papers/Final_IIC_Report_Public_Edition.pdf.
- Kuka, E., and B.A. Stuart. “Racial Inequality in Unemployment Insurance Receipt and Take-Up.” NBER Working Paper 29595. National Bureau of Economic Research, December 2021. <http://www.nber.org/papers/w29595>.
- Livermore, G.A., and S. Colman. “Use of One-Stops by Social Security Disability Beneficiaries in Four States Implementing Disability Program Navigator Initiatives.” Center for Studying Disability Policy, Mathematica Policy Research, 2010. <https://mathematica.org/publications/use-of-onestops-by-social-security-disability-beneficiaries-in-four-states-implementing-disability-program-navigator-initiatives>
- National Congress of American Indians. “Support of U.S. Indigenous Data Sovereignty and Inclusion of Tribes in the Development of Tribal Data Governance Principles.” 2018. <https://www.ncai.org/resources/resolutions/support-of-us-indigenous-data-sovereignty-and-inclusion-of-tribes-in-the-development-of-tribal-data>.
- Needels, K., W. Corson, T. Meier, I. Harley, and K. Blass. “Evaluation of the Impact of Telephone Initial Claims Filing.” Information Technology Support Center, Mathematica Policy Research, March 2000. <https://wdr.doleta.gov/owsdrr/00-3/00-3.pdf>.
- Scott, M., D. Kuehn, L. Eyster, A. Briggs, C. Durham, N. Spievack, A. Simon, and B. Barnow. “Implementation, Outcomes, and Impact Synthesis Report: Round 4 TAACCCT Third-Party Evaluations.” U.S. Department of Labor, Chief Evaluation Office, 2020.
- Shaefer, H.L. “Identifying Key Barriers to Unemployment Insurance for Disadvantaged Workers in the United States.” *Journal of Social Policy*, vol. 39, no. 5, July 2010, pp. 439-460.
- Skandalis, D., I. Marinescu, and M. Massenkoff. “Racial Inequality in the U.S. Unemployment Insurance System.” NBER Working Paper 30252. National Bureau of Economic Research, 2022. <https://www.nber.org/papers/w30252>.
- Tammaro, A. “Native Data Sovereignty Can Address Data Gaps and Improve Equity.” The Urban Institute, 2022. <https://www.urban.org/urban-wire/native-data-sovereignty-can-address-data-gaps-and-improve-equity>.
- U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. “Table 1. Unemployment insurance (UI) benefits applicants and recipients among unemployed persons who had worked in the past 12 months by selected characteristics, 2022.” Economic News Release. Available at: <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/uisup.t01.htm>. Last modified date: March 29, 2023. Accessed May 2, 2023.
- Vargas, E. “Immigration Enforcement and Mixed-Status Families: The Effects of Risk of Deportation on Medicaid Use.” *Children and Youth Services Review*, vol. 57, 2015, pp. 83–89. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2015.07.009>.

Wandner, S., and A. Stettner. “Why Are Many Jobless Workers Not Applying for Benefits?” *Monthly Labor Review*, vol. 123, no. 6, June 2000, pp. 21–32.

WorkforceGPS. “TAA Navigator Model Resources.” January 6, 2023.

<https://taa.workforcegps.org/resources/2019/11/26/17/51/TAA-Navigator-Resources>.

Yin, R.K. *Case Study Research: Design and Methods* (5th edition). SAGE, 2014.

Appendix A

UI Navigators Implementation Study Research Questions

This page has been left blank for double-sided copying.

Table A.1. UI Navigators Implementation Study research questions

Underlying need for navigation; characteristics, needs, and barriers of the populations served by Navigators. What were the populations that Navigators were focusing on? What barriers and complexities did claimants and potential claimants face when seeking benefit assistance, including state-level systems barriers? In what ways might a Navigator intervention help address barriers and burdens that disadvantaged populations face?

Core components of the Navigator model; roles and responsibilities of Navigators. What are core components of the model? What are the roles and responsibilities of Navigators? What were the strategies and activities (including outreach, education and training, and assistance) that Navigators were to deploy to assist claimants and potential claimants? What common types of activities and communications were Navigators to use? What were the characteristics of the organizational structure for the Navigator programs? What equity data indicators were used when designing grant activities? What communication methods, such as social media, brochures, and one-on-one meetings, were planned to disseminate information? What potential models and operational components were considered but rejected, and why?

Partnerships in the Navigator model and characteristics of the partner organizations. What were the grantees' partnerships, and how did they change over time? What are the characteristics of the organizations with staff serving in Navigator roles? Do organizations serving in Navigator roles have memberships in the communities where they are providing services? How are the organizations structured? What kind of history do they have working with local, state, or federal workforce or labor agencies? How do Navigator activities vary based on the characteristics of state UI agencies and their partners?

Navigator model implementation; challenges grantees faced and strategies used to overcome them. How were the UI Navigator Program models implemented? Were they implemented as designed? How did the Navigator programs change over time, such as in response to changes in the local labor market? How did Navigators tailor activities and strategies to the specific populations they would be serving? What were the most common UI eligibility issues that Navigators assisted with? What strategies did Navigators deploy for assisting claimants and potential claimants in building the skills they need to be effective advocates for UI benefits themselves? What were barriers to successful implementation and potential solutions to them? What was the nature of the relationship between the Navigators and the state UI agencies? What were opportunities and challenges in that relationship? What kind of trainings did the partner organizations offer the UI agency? What were state UI agency perceptions of Navigators and their services? How did grant activities interact with other UI initiatives, such as those funded by grants to promote equity in program access, timeliness of payments to eligible workers, and detection and prevention of fraud? What linkages were established with other social safety net programs (such as SNAP or SSDI) to identify and serve claimants and potential claimants? How effective were these linkages? To what extent have UI agencies incorporated insights about how to effectively reach underserved and marginalized populations into their practices?

Navigator training; characteristics, skills, knowledge, and experience of Navigators. What were the processes for recruiting, hiring, and training UI Navigators, and did they vary across grantees? To what extent is automated or artificial intelligence enhancing, supplementing, or affecting Navigator components, roles, and responsibilities? What kind of trainings did the UI agency offer to the partner organizations? What are the backgrounds, skills, knowledge, and experience of staff when they begin serving as Navigators? How and to what extent are Navigator programs supporting the capacity building of Navigators, including deepening their relationship with the communities they are serving?

Promotion of equity; participants' experience with Navigators and the removal of barriers to accessing the UI program. What data were used to assess progress toward greater equity in program access and utilization? To what extent are Navigator and Navigator programs supporting equity in access and opportunity and economic security for underrepresented populations, including access to benefits? How did the UI Navigators help increase awareness of UI benefits to a broader population, especially those who might experience significant barriers to accessing the UI program? How did participants respond to strategies provided by Navigators? What were participants' experiences with UI Navigators? What were participants' expectations, and did UI Navigators meet those expectations? What challenges did participants have in accessing Navigator services? What other types of services do claimants and potential claimants benefit from? To what extent did UI Navigators remove barriers and complexities that claimants and potential claimants faced when seeking benefit assistance? To what extent did UI Navigators help claimants successfully engage with

programs within the UI system? What types of engagement occurred between UI Navigators and claimants with different types of eligibility issues?

Promising Navigator strategies. What successes and challenges did UI agencies and partners perceive when assessing whether they achieved grant goals? What lessons did they learn about how best to assess potential needs for Navigators and potential effectiveness of grant activities? Were some types of communication more effective at increasing engagement with claimants and potential claimants, based on their characteristics and geography? What strategies appear to work with different populations of interest, and why might that be the case? What plans do UI agencies and partners have to incorporate insights after the grant period is over? Do UI agencies and partners plan to continue providing Navigator services after the grant period and, if so, how? What challenges and promising practices might arise with scaling UI Navigator services? What is the evidence of Navigators' effectiveness and for whom? What are data barriers and opportunities for understanding the impact of these programs, considering data that both Navigators and public agencies may be collecting?

SNAP = Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program; SSDI = Social Security Disability Insurance; UI = unemployment insurance.

Appendix B

Topic Guide for Interviews with Grant Administrators, Subgrant Administrators, and Navigators

This page has been left blank for double-sided copying.

In this appendix, we provide a list of topics we will cover during site visit interviews with UI Navigator grant and subgrant administrators and Navigators. We will tailor the interview guide for particular grantees and respondents, and we will build on information we obtain from other study data sources. Not all topics are applicable to all respondents. We likely will not cover all topics with each respondent. For example, the administrative structure and staffing for the Navigator program will be the focus of discussions with the UI state administrator; program implementation will be the focus of discussions with Navigators. A list of topics asked for each respondent type can be found in Table B.1 below. Furthermore, this topic guide covers all topics to be asked about during the site visits. For grantees that we will visit twice, the first visit will focus on topics related to grant planning, start-up efforts, and activities and lessons learned to date. The second visit will focus on changes since the first visit and plans for sustaining grant-related activities after the grant period is over.

Table B.1. Site visit topics, by respondent

Topics	Respondents			
	Grant administrator	Subgrantee administrator	Navigator supervisors	Navigators
1. Respondent background	✓	✓	✓	✓
2. Context and structure of state’s UI program	✓			
3. Background on UI Navigator model and grantee interest in equity data analytics activities	✓			
4. Subgrantee partnerships	✓	✓		
5. Subgrantee organization and culture		✓	✓	
6. Community context	✓	✓		✓
7. Subgrantee administrative structure and staffing		✓	✓	✓
8. Navigator training and supervision	✓		✓	✓
9. Program implementation	✓	✓	✓	✓
10. Data collection and participant outcomes	✓	✓	✓	✓
11. Impact study feasibility/evaluability assessment	✓	✓	✓	✓
12. Successes and challenges/barriers	✓	✓	✓	✓
13. Enhancements/expansion/continuation of Navigator positions	✓	✓		

1. Respondent background
 - a. Name, title, and organization/affiliation
 - b. Role in the grant program and other organization roles
 - c. Length of involvement with the grant and the organization
 - d. Training/educational background
 - e. Portion of time spent on Navigator grant activities per week (e.g., 10%, 30%)
2. Context and structure of state's UI program
 - a. Location, numbers, and functions of UI staff that interact with the public (e.g., whether they serve only UI claimants or other members of the public)
 - b. Proportion of initial and continued claims filed online versus by phone or other methods (e.g., in-person)
 - c. Languages available for claim filing and communications
 - d. Presence of UI staff in person and/or in communities (e.g., in-person at social services offices, AJCs, other community locations)
 - i. Presence of in-person UI staff in communities to be served by Navigators
 - ii. Services provided by in-person UI staff
3. Background on UI Navigator model and grantee interest in equity data analytics activities
 - a. Reasons for applying to the grant
 - i. Data used/analyzed
 - ii. Equity considerations
 - Method(s) for identify target populations
 - Reasons for identifying target populations to focus on
 - b. Reason for specific approach to Navigator grant implementation
 - i. How and why chosen
 - a. Extent to which Navigator implementation is driven by state and/or subgrantees
 - Extent and type of guidance from state to subgrantees
 - ii. Goals of Navigators
 - iii. Models and components considered but not adopted
 - c. Grantee interest in equity data analytics
 - i. Prior equity-related analyses conducted
 - ii. Current equity-related questions of interest
 - iii. Organizational capacity to undertake equity-related analysis in conjunction with DOL
4. Subgrantee partnerships
 - a. Identification and establishment of subgrantee partnerships
 - i. Process of identifying subgrantees, including the methods for doing so and the advantages of each partnership
 - ii. History of working with the subgrantees, if applicable

- iii. Process of developing contracts/agreements with subgrantees
 - iv. Challenges in establishing subgrantee partnerships and strategies to overcome challenges
 - b. Coordination activities with subgrantees
 - c. Sharing of participant information and other data between subgrantees and grantee
- 5. Subgrantee organization and culture
 - a. Size of Navigator organization and years in operation
 - b. Services offered and organizational focus prior to the UI Navigator grant and currently
 - i. Geographic coverage
 - ii. Connections to community
 - iii. Populations served
 - c. Main referral partners (e.g., social services agencies, workforce boards)
 - d. History of working with the state workforce agency and the UI program
 - e. Motivations for offering UI navigation services
 - f. Extent of alignment between the subgrantee's mission and the grant's goals
- 6. Community context
 - a. Labor market conditions, local unemployment levels, and most common industries and occupations
 - b. Demographics of workers experiencing unemployment
 - i. Additional data that grantees and subgrantees collect beyond what is required for UI reporting
 - ii. Data elements collected about the following:
 - a. Sex and gender identity
 - b. Race and/or ethnicity
 - c. Primary language
 - d. Disability status
 - e. Level of educational attainment
 - c. Barriers to accessing UI benefits
 - i. Lack of awareness of the program
 - ii. Lack of understanding of the program rights/responsibilities
 - iii. Other UI state-level systems barriers
 - iv. Literacy issues
 - v. Language issues
 - vi. Distrust of government programs
 - vii. Technological limitations
 - viii. Other
- 7. Subgrantee administrative structure and staffing
 - a. Overall structure of oversight and staffing for UI Navigators

- b. Primary Navigator supervisor/oversight roles and responsibilities
 - c. Navigator hiring process
 - i. Required experience, skills, and abilities
 - ii. Languages spoken by Navigators (e.g., fluency in English or Spanish)
 - d. Navigator characteristics/activities that support collaboration with grantee
 - e. Navigator turnover
- 8. Navigator training and supervision**
- a. Developing Navigator training materials
 - i. Who developed training materials
 - ii. Who delivered the training
 - iii. Were materials new to the grant or adapted from prior initiatives
 - b. Format and setting of Navigator training
 - c. Training content and topic areas
 - d. Assignment of Navigator roles and responsibilities
 - i. Any specialization of roles and responsibilities by certain Navigators
 - ii. Reasons for specialization (e.g., Navigator characteristics, work management considerations)
 - e. Ongoing training and supervision
 - i. Availability of training material for reference
 - ii. Additional trainings (such as for new hires) or refresher courses
 - iii. Additional professional development opportunities
 - f. Monitoring key data/reports and ensuring that Navigators follow up on issues raised during monitoring
 - g. Other guidance and support provided to Navigators during the course of grant implementation
- 9. Program implementation**
- a. Types of Navigator activities and services provided
 - i. Outreach and education
 - a. Outreach to potential claimants and potential claimants
 - i. Target populations
 - ii. Choice of outreach method(s) (e.g., canvassing, flyers, texting program)
 - iii. Recruitment strategies
 - iv. Methods for identifying claimants and potential claimants in target populations
 - v. How eligible claimants and potential claimants are connected to navigator services
 - vi. Enrollment process for claimants and potential claimants, if any
 - b. Language design issues
 - i. Process for translating UI program forms or outreach materials to different languages
 - ii. Process for simplifying the language used on UI program or outreach forms
 - c. Design, planning, and goals of outreach and education events
 - i. Frequency of outreach and education events

- ii. Whether outreach events are pre-existing or organized by the subgrantee
 - iii. Follow up services after outreach and education events
 - ii. One-on-one service to individuals
 - a. Types of services provided; topics discussed
 - i. Translation or interpretation services for individuals
 - ii. Assistance with technology
 - iii. Assistance with specific claims-related issues (e.g., filing initial and/or continued claims, appealing denials, understanding work search requirements)
 - b. Where services are delivered
 - c. Typical number of individuals Navigators work with on a weekly basis
 - d. Average length of time participants receive Navigator services
 - e. Frequency of service receipt or meetings with Navigators
 - f. Follow up services and maintaining contact with participants
 - i. At what point do Navigators stop providing one-on-one services
 - g. Differentiating services provided and activities conducted by Navigators vs. state UI staff
 - i. Which services and/or activities are only provided by Navigators
 - ii. Which services and/or activities overlap between both roles
 - iii. Cross-program coordination and system feedback
 - a. Similarities or differences in services provided across subgrantees
 - b. How Navigators provide feedback about the community's experiences with the UI program
 - c. How Navigators and subgrantees provide feedback to UI staff for program improvement
 - d. Frequency of providing feedback
 - e. Other coordination/feedback
 - b. Target population considerations
 - i. If/how activities and services were tailored for different populations
 - ii. Level of effectiveness in reaching populations identified by grant application/implementation planning
 - c. Any other activities or services provided
- 10. Data collection and participant outcomes**
- a. How the UI agency measures grant successes
 - b. How subgrantees measure successes
 - c. What data are collected and how is it used to measure:
 - i. Demographic characteristics of populations engaged through outreach activities
 - ii. Number and types of outreach activities
 - iii. How claimants and potential claimants heard about services
 - iv. Number and types of group assistance
 - v. Number and types of individual assistance

- vi. UI program access issues and the needs of target populations
 - vii. Improvements in equity and UI program utilization
 - viii. Other participant outcomes (e.g., ability to advocate for benefits and rights)
 - ix. Number of filed and approved UI claims (initial and continued claims)
 - x. Amount of UI benefits received
 - d. Methods grantees use to gather and synthesize data from subgrantees
 - e. Initial findings regarding participant outcomes, UI program access, and UI program equity
- 11. Impact study feasibility/evaluability assessment**
- a. Data available to support a potential impact evaluation
 - i. Participant-level data
 - a. How data are collected
 - b. Where data are stored
 - c. Which participants are asked to provide which types of data
 - d. Availability of PII
 - e. Ability to link to administrative datasets
 - f. Concerns or reactions to collecting PII from participants
 - ii. Progress on data collection and reactions from staff
 - a. Any reactions or concerns from staff or respondents
 - b. Any adjustments to data collection approach
 - iii. Information collected from participants to date
 - b. Number and flow of participants over time
 - i. Number of participants the program aims to serve under the grant (if available)
 - ii. Number of participants served to date
 - iii. Flow of participants over time
 - iv. Total number of participants who provided data to date
 - c. Any other service providers that provide UI-Navigator-like services
 - i. Which service providers
 - ii. Which services are provided
 - d. Subgrantee relationships with communities
 - i. Relationships with target populations
 - ii. Relationships with populations not receiving benefits or services
 - iii. Reactions to Navigator services from target populations
 - e. Completion of grant activities
 - i. Grantee and subgrantee plans to wind down grant activities
- 12. Successes and challenges/barriers**
- a. Successes and challenges in starting up and implementing the Navigator model

- i. Identifying target populations
 - ii. Identifying subgrantee partners to serve the target communities and establishing agreements
 - iii. Hiring and training Navigator staff
 - iv. Implementing outreach and engagement activities
 - v. Challenges affecting whether participants achieve positive outcomes; logistical challenges to serving claimants and potential claimants
 - vi. State systems-level challenges to adopting navigation services
 - vii. Successes or promising strategies for serving claimants and potential claimants
 - viii. Successes, challenges, and lessons learned related to data collection and measurement
 - b. Changes made to implementation model
 - i. Which changes needed to be made and why
 - ii. Solutions tried to overcome or mitigate implementation challenges
 - iii. Program improvements made to better serve target populations
 - c. Perceptions about effectiveness of the grant activities
 - i. Component(s) of the Navigator model with the perceived biggest impact(s)
 - ii. Key program elements for a successful Navigator model
- 13. Enhancement/expansion/continuation of Navigator positions**
- a. Feedback from local communities about ways to improve access to the UI program
 - i. Plans for continued feedback mechanisms for program improvement
 - ii. Any system-wide changes made that affect the UI program and claimants
 - b. Interest in expanding/enhancing/continuing the state's Navigator roles/positions
 - c. Factors for determining whether and when expansion/enhancement will occur
 - d. Alternative approaches to meeting UI program goals without Navigator positions
 - e. Facilitators and barriers to expanding/enhancing/continuing Navigator positions

This page has been left blank for double-sided copying.

Appendix C

Navigator Activity Observation Guide

This page has been left blank for double-sided copying.

Introduction and consent

[Note to observer – At the beginning of the activity, introduce yourself, explain the purpose of the observation, and obtain verbal consent:]

My name is [NAME] and I am from a research company called [Mathematica/Needels Consulting, LLC]. We were hired by the U.S. Department of Labor to conduct a study of Navigators in the workforce system. With your verbal consent, we would like to observe this activity, which will help us help the U.S. Department of Labor learn about how services can be improved. We will not collect your name during the observation. Do you have any questions?

[Respond to any questions.]

Do you consent to have me observe this activity?

[If anyone says no:] Okay, thank you for your consideration. *[Site visitor should leave the activity space.]*

[If yes:] Great, thank you!

NOTE: If the activity is an information session open to the public, the observer will determine with the Navigator whether to introduce the observer and collect consent from the group.

Date: _____ **Observer name(s)** _____

State: _____ **Subgrantee name:** _____

Location: _____

Start time: _____ **End time:** _____ **Full activity observed:** Y / N

Type of activity:

Outreach activities. Specify: _____

Group education or engagement. Specify: _____

One-on-one meeting with a participant. Specify:

Cross-program coordination and feedback. Specify: _____

Other. Specify: _____

Setting for the activity:

In person Video session (e.g., Zoom)

Describe the meeting space (e.g., private office, cubicle, conference room, open space)

Is the setting appropriate for the nature of the activity (e.g., sufficient privacy, enough space, etc.)? Y / N

Why/why not? _____

Were there distractions during the activity (e.g., office noises, children present)? Y / N

Describe: _____

If virtual setting is used, was a camera used by the staff? Y / N

If virtual setting is used, was a camera used by the participant(s)? Y / N

Were there technical issues with the connection (e.g., ability to see or hear each other)? Y / N

Notes during the activity

1. How many people (recipients of Navigation services) are present?

2. Describe the observable characteristics of the people (recipients of Navigation services) present (e.g., approximate ages, ethnicities, and gender identities) [Note: Do not include people's names.]

3. Target population(s) for group event, if known (e.g., veterans, digitally illiterate, immigrants, etc.)

4. Describe the number and type of staff present (e.g., titles/roles)?

5. Do the staff appear to be representative of the participant group, along observable characteristics? Y / N

Describe: _____

6. Describe the focus and content of the activity:

- What is the goal of the activity?
- What are participants and staff doing?
- What topics are discussed?
- What information is provided about the UI program?
- What information is provided about Navigator services?
- What language is the information presented in (if not English)? Are there interpretation services available or used?
- What forms, tools, or equipment (e.g., computers, tablets) are used? How?

- Are materials available in different languages? Which ones?

7. Barriers to access noted by participants

- Eligibility issues, concerns, or misconceptions: _____
- Ongoing certification concerns or issues: _____
- Language barriers: _____
- Technology access or issues: _____
- Other: _____

8. Barriers to access addressed by the activity

- Eligibility issues, concerns, or misconceptions: _____
- Ongoing certification concerns or issues: _____
- Language barriers: _____
- Technology access or issues: _____
- Other: _____

9. Describe the structure of the activity.

- Are staff presenting materials?
- Are staff and participants interacting?
- Was there sufficient equipment or materials for the activity?
- Was information gathered about participants? If yes, what information was gathered?

10. Describe the interactions between participants and staff, as applicable.

- How engaged are participants with the staff? For group activities, are all participants engaged and interacting with staff? Do staff make an effort to engage all participants?
- Do staff appear competent, caring, and respectful in their interactions with participants?

11. How engaged do participants appear with the activity (e.g., are they focused on the tasks, are they asking questions)?

12. Summarize the strengths and weaknesses of the activity you observed.

- Is the activity well-structured and defined?
- Do participants appear to understand the purpose of the activity?
- How satisfied with the activity do participants appear?
- Is time allotted for questions and answers?

13. Record any requests for follow-up from participants

- Do staff make it clear what the next steps are for participants (if applicable)?
- Did any participants request to follow up with Navigators or staff after the activity?
- If yes, how many participants requested to follow up?
- If yes, what did participants want to follow up on?

Additional notes

Appendix D

Topic Guide for Navigator Participant Interviews

This page has been left blank for double-sided copying.

In this appendix, we provide a list of topics we will cover during interviews with UI Navigator participants. Not all topics are applicable to all participants. We likely will not cover all topics with each participant. We will tailor the interview guide for UI participants from particular grantees using information collected during site visits.

1. Participant Background and Needs
 - a. Extent of involvement with the UI program
 - i. Participant awareness of UI benefits prior to interacting with Navigator program
 - ii. Perceived eligibility for UI benefits (e.g., did interviewee think they were eligible for benefits)
 - iii. Eligibility for UI benefits (e.g., did interviewee recently lose a job)
 - a. Any current or past receipt of UI benefits
 - b. Other barriers to accessing UI benefits
 - i. Language
 - ii. Literacy
 - iii. Technology access or issues
 - iv. Understanding UI requirements
2. Outreach and Participant's Initial Engagement with Navigator Services
 - a. How participant became aware of Navigator services
 - i. Participation in any community outreach events with Navigators
 - ii. Referral from another organization or part of the subgrantee organization
 - iii. Receipt of any community outreach media (e.g., social media, flyers, brochures)
 - iv. Whether outreach materials were made available in preferred language
 - b. Reasons for and/or interest in working with Navigators (e.g., language barriers, difficulty understanding eligibility, etc.)
 - c. Experience with initial engagement with Navigator
 - i. Purpose of initial engagement and its setting, format, frequency, and mode (virtual versus in person)
 - d. Any issues with accessibility, including language and technology
 - i. Level of satisfaction with outreach and engagement activities
 - ii. Whether outreach and engagement activities presented an appropriate amount of information
 - iii. Any questions not answered by outreach and engagement activities
3. Experience after Initial Engagement with Navigator Services
 - a. Services that participant hopes to receive by working with Navigator
 - b. Types of Navigator services received
 - i. Length of time working with Navigator
 - ii. Types and frequency of communication with Navigator

- iii. If applicable, type(s) of UI activities received assistance with (e.g., filing an initial or continued claim, understanding benefit rights and responsibilities, handling issues related to eligibility, etc.)
 - iv. Assistance with translation or interpretation
 - v. Education on initial and ongoing eligibility
 - vi. Other assistance (e.g., referrals to other programs or services)
 - c. Types of available Navigator services offered but did not receive and why
 - d. Perceptions of activities and services
 - i. What was most and least helpful
 - ii. Level of satisfaction with services received
 - iii. Were needs met through Navigator services
 - e. Challenges of accessing Navigator services (i.e., childcare issues, lack of WiFi access, scheduling issues, etc.)
 - f. Challenges with language or interpretation
 - g. Experience with and perceptions of the Navigator(s)
 - h. Whether and how Navigator/Navigator services helped decrease barriers, increase access to UI benefits, and increase ability to advocate for self for UI-related benefits and rights
 - i. Probe on barriers related to:
 - a. Language
 - b. Literacy
 - c. Technology access or issues
 - d. Understanding UI requirements
- 4. Reflections of Program Experience
 - a. Other assistance they would have liked to have received
 - b. Recommendations for improving Navigator services

Appendix E

Survey Topic Guide for Navigators

This page has been left blank for double-sided copying.

In this appendix, we provide a list of topics we will include in our web survey of UI Navigators. Not all topics are applicable to all UI Navigator grantees, subgrantees, or Navigators, but all topics will be available to survey respondents.

1. Navigator background
 - a. Focus of Navigator role (e.g., only providing UI navigation services, or providing navigation of other benefits as well)
 - b. Share of time spent on UI navigation services (FT/PT)
 - c. Length of time in role
 - d. Rate of pay and benefits
 - e. Lived experiences with unemployment, UI, and labor unions
 - f. Previous work experience, what brought them to this role
2. Navigator training
 - a. Format and setting of Navigator training
 - b. Length and types of trainings Navigator experienced
 - c. Who administered trainings (For example, CBO, State UI, both, other)
 - d. Training content and topic areas
 - e. Availability of training materials for reference
 - f. Opportunities for ongoing or follow-up trainings
 - g. Time spent on training materials in the past week
 - i. Estimated time spent on training materials per month
3. Navigator activities (collect target population, mode, and frequency for each)
 - a. Outreach activities
 - i. Planned number of outreach activities (per week or per month)
 - ii. Time spent on these activities in the prior week
 - a. Number of activities conducted in the prior week
 - b. Education and assistance activities
 - i. One on-one assistance
 - a. Caseload size
 - i. Caseload size in the past week (total number of participants worked with)
 - ii. Expected caseload size (number assigned to Navigator per week or per month)
 - iii. Individual services offered
 - ii. Group information sessions and community education events
 - a. Planned number of information sessions or education events
 - b. Number of sessions or events conducted in the past week
 - iii. Time spent on these activities in the prior week

- c. Perceived success of activities
 - i. How activities are received by Navigator participants
 - ii. Effects on UI access for populations of interest
 - iii. Most effective communication strategies
- d. Perceived challenges of activities
- 4. Feedback for program improvement
 - a. Feedback from community
 - b. Feedback from Navigators to state
 - c. Time spent on program improvement activities in the past week
 - i. Estimated time spent on program improvement activities per month
- 5. Addressing barriers populations face in accessing UI benefits
 - a. Types of barriers
 - i. Learning barriers
 - ii. Language barriers
 - iii. Compliance barriers
 - iv. Psychological barriers
 - v. UI program-specific barriers (e.g., complexity of eligibility requirements, documentation requirements)
 - b. Addressing barriers
 - i. Methods for addressing barriers
- 6. Demographics
 - a. Age
 - b. Education
 - c. Race and ethnicity
 - d. Immigrant or born in US
 - e. Languages spoken and level of fluency
 - f. Gender identity and sexual orientation
 - g. Disability
 - h. Veteran's status
 - i. Income
 - j. Religion
 - k. Geography

Appendix F

Navigator Reporting Tool

This page has been left blank for double-sided copying.

In this appendix, we provide the contents of the Navigator Reporting Tool that was created by DOL for states to use for reporting Navigator grant activities to DOL.

1. Outreach Report to State. Collects aggregate counts of outreach activities by target population. The outreach activities are:

- a. Online/Web postings (i.e., FAQs)
- b. Social Media
- c. Webinars
- d. Leaflets/Brochures
- e. Call Center/Phone Banking
- f. In-person Group Info Sessions
- g. In-person One on One Assistance
- h. Other

The target populations are:

- a. Person of Color (Black/African American, Hispanic, Asian)
- b. Indigenous Person (American Indian or Alaska Native)
- c. Low Paid Worker
- d. Older Worker (55+)
- e. Woman
- f. Person with Disabilities
- g. Person with Limited Educational Opportunities (i.e., less than a high school diploma)
- h. Non-English and Limited English Proficient Person
- i. Individual Residing in Rural Communities
- j. Individual with Limited Access to the Internet
- k. Digitally Illiterate Individual
- l. Member of the LGBTQI+ Community
- m. Formerly Incarcerated
- n. Veteran
- o. Individual without Stable Housing
- p. Another Underserved Community
- q. Prefer Not to Disclose
- r. Unable to Track

2. Services Report to State. Collects aggregate counts of individual Navigation services by the same target populations listed under 1. The individual Navigation services are:

- a. Filing an Initial Claim
- b. Adjudication/Fact Finding
- c. Weekly Certification
- d. Completing Work Search
- e. Appeals (i.e., filing; attend hearing)
- f. Overpayments (i.e., apply for waiver)
- g. Re-employment
- h. ID verification
- i. Other

3. Individual Worksheet. Collects the following individual level data on Navigator participants.

- a. Target population (Responses options are the same as listed under 1)
- b. Outreach type: How did the claimant hear about you? (Responses options are the same as listed under 1)
- c. Service type: What UI activity did you assist them with? Check al that apply (Responses options are the same as listed under 2)
- d. Date of assistance request
- e. Date of resolution
- f. Geographic location of assistance

This page has been left blank for double-sided copying.

Mathematica Inc.

Princeton, NJ • Ann Arbor, MI • Cambridge, MA
Chicago, IL • Oakland, CA • Seattle, WA
Woodlawn, MD • Washington, DC

EDI Global, a Mathematica Company

Operating in Tanzania, Uganda, Kenya, Mozambique, and the United Kingdom

Mathematica, Progress Together, and the “spotlight M” logo are registered trademarks of Mathematica Inc.



mathematica.org [website](#)