

Policy As Code: Enabling Timely Unemployment Insurance Improvements

Team Oak 🌳
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Leadership Initiative

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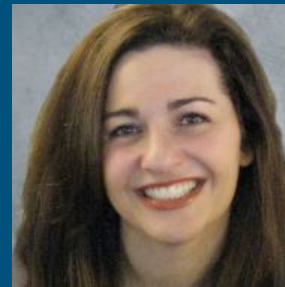
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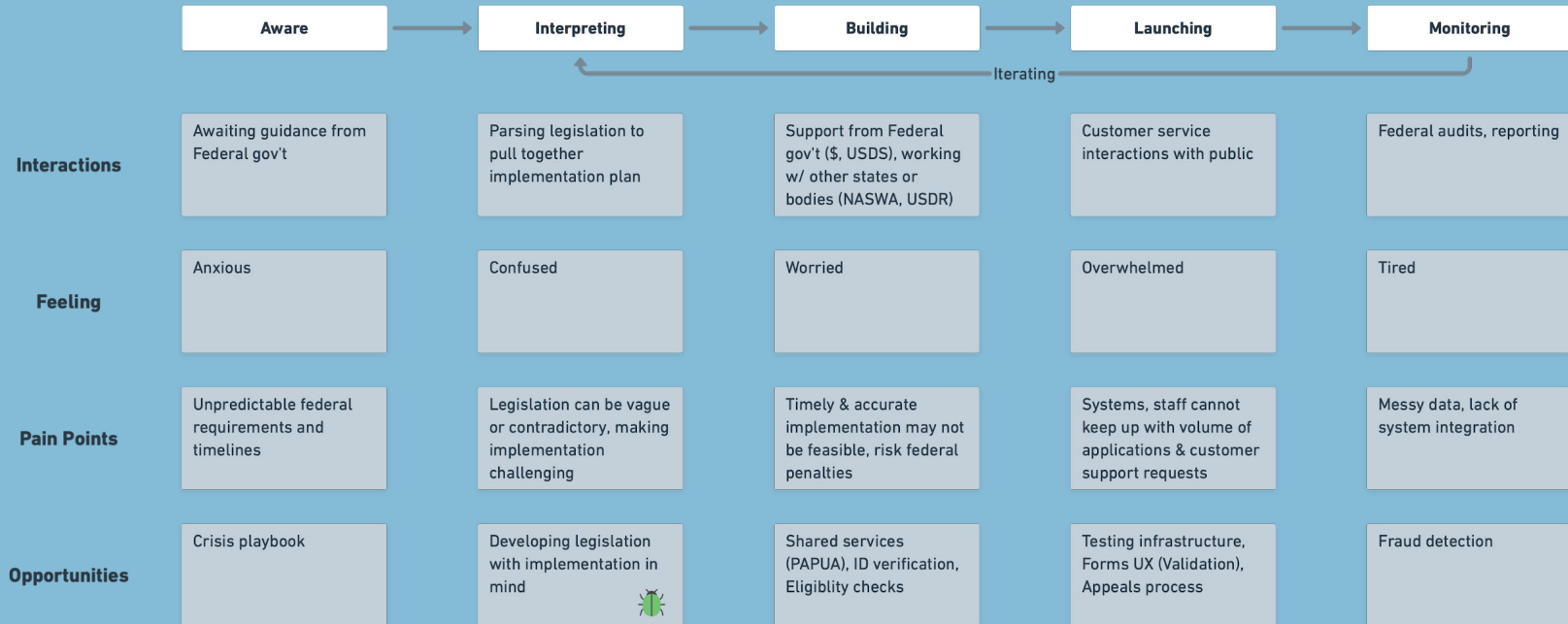
Problem Statement

State Unemployment Insurance (UI) Agencies struggle in quickly adopting changes to UI laws and implementing Federal Department of Labor guidance in a consistent and compliant manner. Key challenges include:

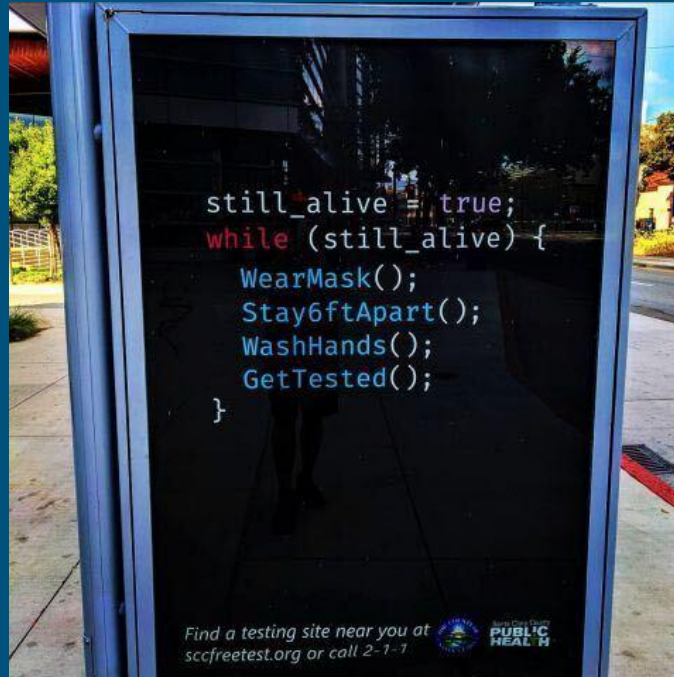
- **Implementation time pressures** during times of crisis
- **Complex and vague laws** that interplay with previous regulations and State UI benefit systems in unanticipated ways
- **Collaboration challenges** between the State and Federal agencies

Key Opportunities in the State Agency Journey

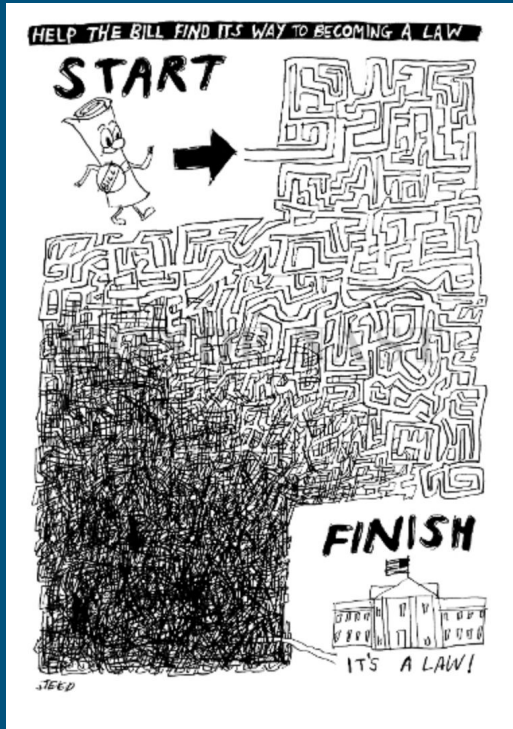
User Journey Map: State Agencies Implementing UI Changes



Solution: Policy as Code



Solution: Why Policy As Code?



Conway's Law:

Broken Communication = Broken Experiences

For CARES Act alone, the ETA issued:

- 30 program letters consisting of
- 460 pages of guidance which includes
- 364 references and
- 63 attachments

Solution: Policy As Code Example

```
# Individuals
```

```
if unemployed:
```

```
    applyForBenefits()
```

```
# States
```

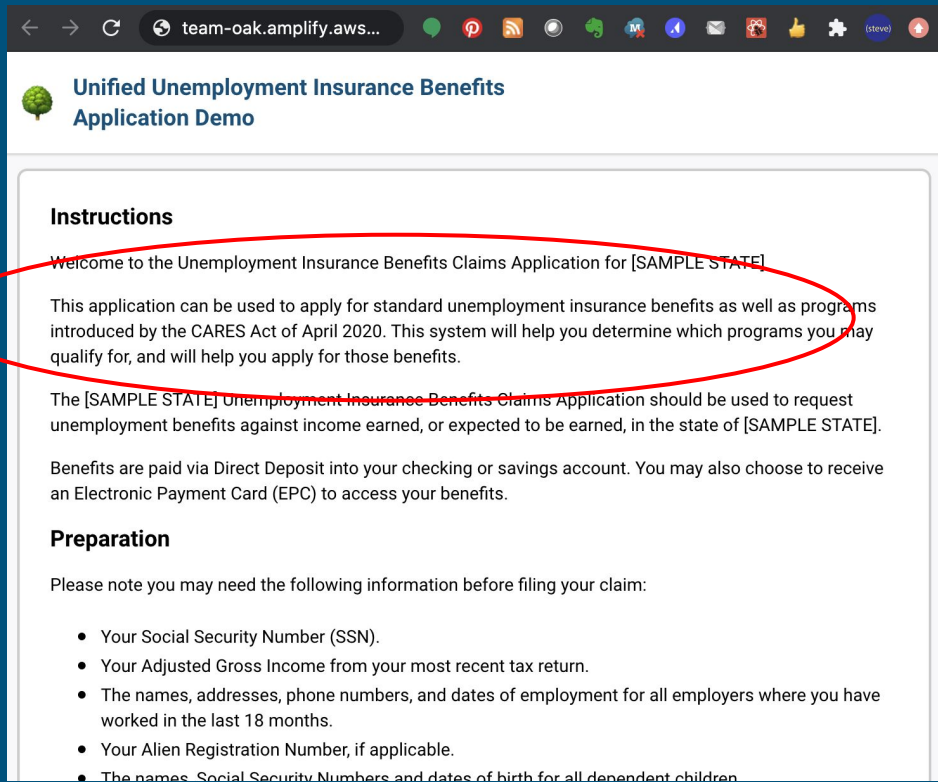
```
if applicant_is_eligible_for_pua:
```

```
    givePandemicUnemploymentAssistance()
```

NOT

Learn about the qualification criteria for regular unemployment insurance and PUA and PEUC, figure out which you are eligible for and apply for that one, but note that if you're applying for PUA you should first apply for regular UI, wait for your rejection, and only then submit your PUA claim, which at that point should be backdated, but only if your state form allows you to backdate the claim... .

Solution: Policy As Code Example



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Unified Unemployment Insurance Benefits Application Demo

Instructions

Welcome to the Unemployment Insurance Benefits Claims Application for [SAMPLE STATE].

This application can be used to apply for standard unemployment insurance benefits as well as programs introduced by the CARES Act of April 2020. This system will help you determine which programs you may qualify for, and will help you apply for those benefits.

The [SAMPLE STATE] Unemployment Insurance Benefits Claims Application should be used to request unemployment benefits against income earned, or expected to be earned, in the state of [SAMPLE STATE].

Benefits are paid via Direct Deposit into your checking or savings account. You may also choose to receive an Electronic Payment Card (EPC) to access your benefits.

Preparation

Please note you may need the following information before filing your claim:

- Your Social Security Number (SSN).
- Your Adjusted Gross Income from your most recent tax return.
- The names, addresses, phone numbers, and dates of employment for all employers where you have worked in the last 18 months.
- Your Alien Registration Number, if applicable.
- The names, Social Security Numbers and dates of birth for all dependent children.

One application that guides the applicant to the benefits appropriate for their scenario.

(think TurboTax)

Solution: Policy As Code Example



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Solution: Policy As Code Rollout

1. **Hackathon** to enable co-development of policy as code between federal and state agencies
2. **Multi-State Council** to uncover impediments to implementation early
3. **Reference Implementation** to reduce burden of starting implementation



Impact: What does success look like?

For State Agencies: Implementation Time Reduction

For End Beneficiaries: Benefit Delivery Time Reduction (to < 21 days)

Future Work

Iterate and Validate Solution

- Additional Interviews
- User Feedback

Development of Playbook

- Document best practices and lessons learned with specific sections focused on:
 - Crisis and unexpected events; and
 - Implementation of non-crisis federal legislation and regulations

Conclusion

Policy as Code is intended to be an enabler of collaboration, not a replacement for it.

The broadest solutions are best informed by a combination of automation and human skill.

The recommendations contained herein should not be considered to be a single perfect process but, rather, a framework in which processes can evolve. They should be living and iterative to adjust to changes and circumstances in both crisis and non-crisis.

Q&A

