Additional Information on Improving Mobile Usability

With 90 percent of Americans owning a smart phone and many unemployment applicants seeking to access UI benefit on a cell phone, addressing customer experience (CX) requires improved mobile usability.[1] The following examples note ways to improve mobile usability and expand on the Improve Mobile Usability section 4.b.V of TEN No. 18-24.

Some examples of improving mobile usability include:

- **Mobile responsive design:** State websites should automatically change their look and feel when a user is utilizing a mobile device, but the functionality and usability should remain the same regardless of screen size.
- **Stacking elements to fit the screen width** – Stack elements that take up multiple columns on desktop sites to ensure they remain readable on mobile devices. Stacking elements guarantees that the elements fit the mobile device screen size, so they don't roll over or get crammed.
- **Standardizing page length** – Use a standardized page length, which will determine the maximum amount of content that can appear on a page, rather than allowing each page's length to be determined by the content. Design a standardized layout for your unemployment insurance (UI) application and site pages that considers page length and the amount of content each page should include. A standardized page length throughout your UI application and site can help break down content or forms into smaller pages. This approach allows users to find key information and tasks easily without having to scroll far.
- **Using white space** – White space is the blank or empty space surrounding the elements on a page. This space helps organize and structure your content. For example, white space can help divide content into meaningful sections and group related topics together. Use white space to separate each section. Make sure the white space is proportional to the size of the screen.
- **Limiting alert banners** – Limit the use of alerts to information that is relevant to most people visiting your website. On desktop, alerts are a helpful way to call attention to time-sensitive information. However, on mobile devices, alerts take up screen space that could be better used for other, more relevant content. They can be disorienting for users, block content, and push down key information. Manage alerts appropriately and take them down once the situation is no longer critical.
- **Creating easy-to-tap elements** – Make buttons, links, and other interactive elements large enough so that users can tap on them without accidentally pressing on nearby elements; also, be sure to include enough white space around each element. Generally, tap elements or touch targets should be at least 44 pixels or 10 millimeters.
- **Using click-to-call options** – Click-to-call options allow users to click a telephone number and automatically call as opposed to manually dialing the telephone number.
- **Utilizing font hierarchy** – Headings help users quickly identify the information they need in order to complete tasks. Use headings to structure content into clear sections. Headings for sections that are at the same level should have consistent font styling.

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[1] Please see Improving mobile usability for claimants, https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/ui-modernization/customer-experience/mobile-usability.

- **Wrapping text to fit screen width** – Set text to wrap to fit the width of the page to ensure that the text doesn't overflow the page. Long text spans can easily create horizontal scrolls or cause layout misconfigurations by pushing other elements out of place. Setting the text to wrap helps users access the content of UI applications and sites on mobile devices.
- **Making body text readable** – The text of the UI application and site should be easy to read at a comfortable distance from the screen. The ideal base font size for mobile screens is 16 pixels. Anything smaller will likely force users to pinch the screen and zoom in and out to read the text.
- **Using the correct keyboard** – Form input fields should trigger the correct keyboards (numeric or alphabetical) to reduce the amount of typing and effort required when completing a UI application and forms on mobile devices. When tapped, input fields should trigger the numeric keyboard if the input field requires numbers (for example, a phone number or a Social Security Number) and the alphabetical keyboard when text is required (for example, a name or explanation).
- **Using auto format** – As users enter numbers in the UI application and site, the application and site should automatically apply the desired format. Adopting this approach prevents confusion and helps the user identify possible entry mistakes.

Focusing on these areas will increase equitable access and improve CX by reducing frustration due to adjusting their view of the UI content and allowing users to seamlessly navigate through the different information.