



State of Colorado DHR Employee Benefits Website

Usability Test Plan

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1. Purpose of the Usability Test

Usability is the measure of how well a product supports users in quickly and easily accomplishing tasks that are important to them. Usability testing is a method for measuring the usability of the product—by observing real users as they use the product to complete real tasks—and then generating design solutions to fix usability problems.

The purpose of this usability test is to validate the overall design approach and to uncover usability problems with the new Employee Benefits website by observing as State employees and benefits administrators performed basic benefits research and selection tasks. In the short term, usability testing will provide an opportunity to identify and fix usability problems before the benefits website is used by all State employees. In the long term, usability testing will help DHR to make further improvements to the benefits website and help DPA to leverage findings in the design of other personnel administration websites.

Specific goals and questions we want to address with the test are:

- Validate the design approach – Do test participants understand the navigational framework of the site? Does the approach match the user’s level of experience with benefits concepts and assumptions about how they would go about researching benefits? Do users like the new design?
- Identify problems with the user interface – Are test participants able to navigate to the various benefit areas and fit information about each benefit choice?
- Find out whether participants prefer the new site design or the existing site.

2. Test Participants and Tasks

Ten test participants will evaluate the benefits website user interface design. All participants will be State employees; and half of them will be benefits administrators.

During the test sessions, we will ask participants to work through a variety of typical benefits research tasks, ranging from identifying which health plans they are eligible for to selecting a health plan to finding out what the cost of a specific prescription would be under their health plan. Participants will also look at retirement plans and research the different investment options available to them.

Tasks will include:

1. Selecting a health insurance plan
2. Finding out about health savings accounts
3. Finding out if a prescription medication is covered by a selected health insurance plan
4. Finding out whether specific medical services are covered by a selected health insurance plan
5. Finding retirement plans
6. Selecting a retirement plan
7. Challenging a decision made by the human resources department

Detailed test scenarios will be provided in a separate document (Usability Test Participant Workbook).

3. Test Outcomes

There will be 3 deliverables for this usability test:

- A detailed formal report summarizing all usability issues uncovered by the test and recommendations for fixing each problem. We will categorize problems as:
 - **Severity 1:** Critical usability issues that prevent users from being able to complete key tasks or cause data loss
 - **Severity 2:** Serious usability issues that cause a delay or frustrate the user, but the user can work around the problem
 - **Severity 3:** Minor usability issues that cause a minor problem for the user or would enhance usability if fixed
- Wire frames illustrating recommendations for fixing all critical and serious problems.
- A presentation of findings and recommendations to DHR staff.

For more information about improving your product's usability or integrating user-centered design methods into your organization, please contact us.

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