



THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS  
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF LABOR AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  
DEPARTMENT OF UNEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE

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**DUA ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING**

Thursday December 21, 2023  
Meeting Minutes

**Council Attendees:** Richard Marlin, John Drinkwater, Christopher Carlozzi, Sam Larson  
**EOLWD/DWD/DUA/Public Attendees:** Katie Dishnica, David Gold, John Saulnier, Jeannie Pena, Mavis Smith, Jason Salgado, Sara Bahrehmand, Rena Kottcamp, Emma Hornsby, Wendy Filosi, Houda Amoakuh, Paul Fitzgerald, Mark Costello, Lisa Hemmerle

A virtual meeting was held via Zoom.

Motion was proposed to approve the November 2023 meeting minutes.

- Motion was seconded.
- Vote on Motion – all in favor to approve.

**Executive update**

Katie Dishnica, Director of DUA, provided an executive update.

The first update is that the DUA Advisory Council has a new council member. There wasn't enough time to add the new council member to the December Advisory Council meeting. The new council member should be able to attend January's meeting. It is the director's understanding that DUA may have a sixth council member, but they have not been sworn in yet.

The second update is in regard to the Federal Tax intercept process. There was discussion about uncoupling debt from 2019. All the technical updates have been completed and the Department of Treasury has done all testing necessary. DUA has passed the testing process. DUA will receive a certification from the Department of Treasury stating that we are able to move forward with tax intercepts.

The third update is that DUA continues to work with Login.gov to launch a new identity verification program and holds weekly technical meetings. Claimants will be able to verify their identity with login.gov and USPS. DUA is excited for this program to go live.

The fourth update is DUA will be moving the call center to a new platform. The new platform will give us more flexibility and functionality to build out queues and for constituents to be able to reach DUA representatives directly via phone.

The fifth update is regarding rate notices. DUA is working on sending out rate notices. We are waiting for final approvals.

### **UI trust fund**

Lisa Hemmerle, Director of the Department of Economic Research, provided an update on the UI trust fund. This is for information through November 30th.

- The balance of the trust fund is \$3.03 billion.
- YTD employer contributions \$833.2 million.
- YTD Benefit payments \$1.9Billion for 770, 635 initial and continuing claims.
- Projections will be updated in January 2024.

<https://www.mass.gov/uitrustfund>

### **Discussion/ Questions:**

Katie Dishnica mentioned that she is interested in the council's feedback on Advisory Council meetings to ensure members are receiving the information they need. What was helpful in the past for DUA to bring to this meeting? Is there any interest in numbers such as work queues or other metrics?

**Question by Rich Marlin:** Covid is over, one week waiting period is back. In general, is it three weeks from the time the claimant applies to get payment?

**Answer by Katie Dishnica:** From filing to first check the timeframe is now under 21 days. The issue constituents face now is that they are trying to file a claim but cannot because someone is using their social security number. DUA is working to streamline the process of resolving the fraudulent claim so that constituents can file a valid claim. DUA recognizes it's an issue and is working to solve it.

**Question by Chris Carlozzi:** Any updates on the 2.5 billion federal issue? Any window or projection on when there might be an answer? I understand conversations are ongoing between the Federal Government and the Healey administration. We would like to get some more information at the agency level.

**Answer by Katie Dishnica:** We have nothing to share at this point.

Katie Dishnica mentioned again to provide any feedback or suggestions for the Advisory Council Meeting.

**Rich Marlin:** What would be interesting to me is the employment data by industry. Specifically, I would be interested in metrics comparing employment in the construction industry to see if employment is going up or down.

Next meeting is January 18, 2024, at 9:30AM. Please let Sara or Katie know if you are unable to attend the meeting. Meeting adjourned