



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

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DUA ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING

Thursday, February 15, 2024
Meeting Minutes

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

A virtual meeting was held via Zoom.

A motion was proposed to approve the January 2024 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 regarding employee recognition. Going forward, Katie will highlight employee events and engagements. Two members of our management team, Scott Flatto and Denise Schille, represented DUA at the NAUIAP webinar. They talked about hiring during a crisis and represented DUA well. Mark Costello attended the WIOA public comment session and represented DUA. Jeannie Pena, Director of Appeals, will be working with Catholic Charities and training their new interpreters.

The second update is regarding 1099G forms. The forms have been issued. Two hundred and thirty thousand have been issued. There is a process for constituents who received a 1099G but should not have. The constituents are able to complete a form online at mass.gov.

The third update is in regard to fraud. It is important that we address this issue. It is the source of most of the incoming calls to customer service. It is a huge part of our business. There are a few things happening. There was a pilot pop-up for claimants who were disqualified on an Identity Verification issue. One hundred and twenty people came to Brockton in one day to verify their identity. There were only a few no shows and they received dismissal notices. We are very excited about the outcome and are in the process of scheduling more and in other areas.

The fourth update is in regard to expanding the online fraud reporting form. Previously claimants could only use this form to report that someone had filed a claim with their information. Now, claimants have the option to tell DUA that someone filed a claim using their information and they need to file a new claim, as well as notify DUA that their claim has been hacked and contact or payment information was changed by a hacker.

The fifth update is in regard to Program Integrity. DUA is working with login.gov/USPS to launch this new identity verification program, hopefully by March. Mark Costello, Chief of Staff, explained that DUA is in the testing phase for this solution. Every new claimant that files a claim will need to verify their identity. Currently

we are utilizing FIVS as the primary verification and the secondary verification is id.me. Id.me will be replaced by login.gov/USPS. Claimants will have the option to go to a local retail post office in person or verify their identity online through login.gov. There will be instances of disqualification if claimants don't adhere to the guidance.

Question by Rich Marlin: Are you saying that at the end of the month someone can go into a post office to verify their identity?

Answer by Katie Dishnica: We will message when this is ready. Generally, yes this is the idea.

Mark Costello provided an update on a pilot program with MassHire. DUA is working with Berkshire MassHire location for constituents in Western MA who need assistance verifying their identity. DUA is working with MassHire to accept ID documents for claimants who need assistance with providing their ID documents to DUA. MassHire will not be verifying the claimant's identity. DUA is looking to expand this to other MassHire locations after reviewing how many claimants utilize this service.

Katie stressed that MassHire is not doing identity verification. Program Integrity will be verifying the claimant's identity. MassHire will receive identity documents and assist claimants with the technology and uploading documents.

Katie Dishnica explained that the callback functionality was implemented earlier this month for claimants who call customer service. Claimants who are in queue can request a callback from DUA, so they don't have to wait on hold. DUA is working to improve service in this area.

DUA continues to work on recession readiness. DUA continues to work on the cleanup effort for fraudulent claims so when constituents do need to file an unemployment claim, they have a seamless experience. Meetings on this topic are held regularly so that DUA can continue to be proactive.

UI trust fund

Lisa Hemmerle, Director of the Department of Economic Research, provided an update on the UI trust fund. The February 2024 Trust update is through the month of January.

- As of 1/31/2024 the end balance of the UI Trust fund is \$2.7B
- The YTD preliminary employer contributions \$59.74M
- YTD DUA paid \$238.7M for Regular UI for 89,584 initial and continuing claims

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

Discussion/ Questions:

Question Rich Marlin: I seem to be getting more out of state contractors bidding on work in MA. At what point do they have to file with DUA?

Answer by Katie Dishnica: It can be complicated. We have done extensive research on this before and it is on a case-by-case basis.

Answer by David Gold: It is complicated and on a case by-case basis. We have talked about this before.

Question by Rich Marlin: Are there any guidelines? Do the workers file with us in MA when they get laid off?

Answer by David Gold: There are two different issues. One is where a worker files has to do with a localization analysis under section 3 of 151A. Where the employer is required to pay their contributions is a different analysis.

Question by Rich Marlin: Do the workers file here in MA since their residence is here? The bulk of the employer's business is in another state.

Answer by David Gold: If you would like to email me, I can take a look. I want to look at what I previously said so I'm not being inconsistent.

Next meeting is March 21, 2024, at 9:30AM. Please let Sara or Katie know if you are unable to attend the meeting. Meeting adjourned.