



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

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GOVERNOR

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LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

LAUREN E. JONES  
SECRETARY

KATIE DISHNICA  
DIRECTOR

**DUA ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING**

Thursday, July 24, 2025  
Meeting Minutes

**Council Attendees:** Richard Marlin, John Drinkwater, Chris Carlozzi, Renee Harper, Sam Larson  
**EOLWD/DWD/DUA/Public Attendees:** Katie Dishnica, David Gold, Josh Cutler, Lisa Hemmerle, Jeannie Pena, Olga Merchan, Corey Mescon, Ashley Thompson, John Saulnier, Jason Salgado, Laura Santiago, Rena Kottcamp, Veronica Vivero Condon, Corinna Svarlien, Wendy Savary, Ella Paul

A virtual meeting was held via Zoom.

A motion was proposed to approve the June 2025 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 Board of Review positions. To ensure we attract the strongest possible candidates, we are extending the application deadline to August 15, 2025, for the Board of Review positions. The additional time will allow us to reach a broader audience and encourage more qualified applicants to apply. Please continue to share the opportunity within your networks.

**Question by John Drinkwater:** Is the salary posted? Will the deadline be updated on the posting?

**Answer by Katie Dishnica:** We will look into it.

The next update is regarding the State Information Data Exchange System (SIDES). As a reminder, we are implementing 3 modules: Separation information, Earnings, and Additional Fact Finding. This will support our TPAs and employers, who have shared with us how important this service is to their business and the clients that they serve. The majority of the large TPAs use SIDES to respond to fact-finding in other states, and

Massachusetts is excited to become a part of this. We are hoping that this new option will help us get responses from TPAs and employers even sooner than before and stop improper payments at an early stage.

Yesterday, technology went into production for three TPAs to start using SIDES. We should start to see responses tomorrow. This will allow us to gather feedback from them to streamline the process. In addition, we have a smaller adjudication team focused on working on these new responses and they can help inform us of any additional procedural updates that we should make. DUA will implement SIDES for all TPAs and employers in October. By that time, all adjudication staff will be trained prior to this second go-live date.

The next update is regarding service levels. As we enter our seasonal summer peak, DUA continues to face an increased volume of unresolved claims and issues. We have the seasonal peak every year, but this year is unique because we are dealing with a learning curve for both staff and external stakeholders like claimants and employers with the new system.

DUA has shifted some phone support staff to adjudication. Adjusters added to the phones previously have been brought back to adjudication. We continue to have vendor support with FH Cann to assist with calls in the call center. We are prioritizing issues that are holding payment. Issues not holding pay are aging but we need to make sure we are getting payments out to claimants. DUA is working to streamline workflows and implement technical changes to speed up processing.

DUA is removing unnecessary issues that were created by claimants in error and delaying claims. For example, bus drivers who were laid off for the summer indicated that they are still working. This creates an issue to be reviewed. Some union members who file a new claim are being asked to provide three work search activities. This is due to the claimants not answering correctly the question that asks if they must look for work exclusively through a union hiring hall.

**Question by Rich Marlin:** We are seeing an uptick in union members calling and saying they have to do work search. Can you send me the screenshots of the question on their union work search status so they can answer it correctly? Also, a few members are getting selected for RESEA.

**Answer by Katie Dishnica:** We will set up a meeting with Constituent Services to go over that.

DUA is exploring all options to provide appropriate service levels including assessing and evaluating models in other states which reported measurable success in reducing their adjudication backlog and improving overall operational performance.

## **UI Trust Fund Update**

Lisa Hemmerle Director of Economic Research provided the UI Trust Fund Update. The following information relates to the reporting on the Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund (“UI Trust Fund”) for the month of June 2025.

- As of June 30, 2025, the preliminary UI Trust Fund ending balance was \$2.24B.
- Year-to-date through June 30, 2025, preliminary employer contributions totaled \$1.02B.
- Year-to-date through June 30, 2025, DUA paid \$1.18B in benefits for regular UI for 448,054 initial and continuing claims.

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/unemployment-insurance-trust-fund-uitf>

**Next meeting - August 21, 2025, 9:30AM. Please let Katie or Sara know if you are unable to attend.**