



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

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DUA ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING

Thursday June 15, 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, Victoria Ireton, Rena Kottcamp, Lisa Hammerle, Eric Hansson, Emma Hornsby, Wendy Filosi, Houda Amoakuh, Paul Fitzgerald

A virtual meeting was held via Webex.

Motion was proposed to approve the May 2023, meeting minutes.

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

UI trust fund

Lisa Hammerle, Director of the Department of Economic Research, provided an update and link for the June 2023 report.

- The UI trust fund balance is 3.62 billion YTD as of May 31.
- \$582.48 million in employer contributions.
- DUA paid \$935.6 million in benefits for Regular Unemployment insurance benefits for 497.62 thousand initial and continuing claims.
- Projections have not changed. Data visualizations are available by visiting the link below.
mass.gov/info-details/unemployment-insurance-trust-fund-uitf

Executive update

Rick Jeffers, Executive Sponsor of EMT, provided an update on the EMT project. The first phase of the project, or tax phase, is continuing and moving forward. It has been decided to change the go live date for the EMT project from June to September 12th. During recent meetings to discuss organizational readiness, it was learned that employees could use more time for training, communications, and testing. The feedback received from these meetings is that the EMT system will be a really good system when DUA does go live. The team will spend the summer to become comfortable, confident, and ready to go with the new system.

Katie Dishnica, Director of DUA, provided an executive update. The first update is that the Director of Revenue role at DUA is still available and posted on MassCareers.

The second update is regarding fraud. The numbers have come down, but this may mean we have a little time to prepare for a future spike. In the past, DUA has sent out PIN letters to claimants. This process will resume at the end of this month to provide a multi-layered approach to fraud. When a claim is filed, it may pass data analytics, meaning the information is accurate. A letter will then be mailed to the claimant at their address on file to act and confirm if they did or didn't file a claim. In the past fraudsters filed a new claim using correct information and then after clearing identity verification, they were able to change the payment method on the claim. The PIN process will stop that up front. Outreach will be done so people are prepared for the new process. We are working with DOL and NASWA on best practices and what additional things we can be doing to combat fraud.

The third update is regarding employers and fraud reporting. At the last meeting, we discussed steps employers can take to report fraud and instructions on completing questionnaires received on a fraudulent claim. This information has been posted on mass.gov/uima and the link is also below:

mass.gov/info-details/dua-employer-customer-service-resources

The fourth update is that there has been an interest in grants. Currently, there are four grants that we are pursuing. This will be a standing agenda item to provide updates on the applications. There is a team working on those applications. DUA is working with the Department of Labor Region 1 office to get the application in a good position.

Discussion/Questions

Question: Christopher Carozzi asked if there was any update on the 2.5 billion, what's new or conversations going on?

Answer: Katie Dishnica explained there are no updates at this time. We will share information when we have it.

Next meeting July 20, 2023, 9:30 – 11:30 AM. Please let Sara or Katie know if you are unable to attend the meeting.

Meeting adjourned