



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

MAURA HEALEY
GOVERNOR

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LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

LAUREN E. JONES
SECRETARY

KATIE DISHNICA
DIRECTOR

DUA ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING

Thursday March 16, 2023

Meeting Minutes

Council Attendees: Richard Marlin, John Drinkwater, Christopher Carlozzi, Sam Larson

EOLWD/DWD/DUA/Public Attendees: Katie Dishnica, David Gold, Rick Jeffers, 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 February 2023, meeting minutes.

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

Executive update

Katie Dishnica, Acting Director, explained the executive order to allow virtual meetings expires end of this month. If the executive order is extended, we can continue with virtual meetings. If in person, Katie will inform everyone. In person meeting will be held at 100 Cambridge St. in Boston. Katie is looking into to see if hybrid meetings are allowed where one or more persons attend virtually and others in person.

DUA still has open positions available. We are searching for a Director of Revenue, Deputy Director of Business, and IT Strategy. If you know of anyone, please look on Mass Careers for listings.

UI trust fund

Lisa Hammerle, Director of the Department of Economic Research, provided update and link for the February 2023 report mass.gov/info-details/unemployment-insurance-trust-fund-uitf. Ms. Hemmerle explained that visual and historical data for the Trust Fund Balance, initial claims, and benefits paid have been added to the report. Data can be downloaded as a pdf. Projections have not been updated since January. The next quarterly data will be in April.

YTD information as of February 28, 2023

- \$3.67 billion UI trust fund balance
- \$35.95 million employer contributions
- \$382.34 million benefits paid for 160,000 claims

EMT Update and Presentation

Rick Jeffers, Executive Sponsor of UI Transformation, gave a presentation and update on EMT, or Employment Modernization and Transformation Program. Mr. Jeffers is the former DUA Director and is now the sponsor of the EMT project. The EMT system will be replacing the UI Online system. The history of EMT project starts in 2018. Secretary Acosta commissioned an assessment of UI Online to determine if an investment was needed to update or replace the system. In 2019, the Tiger team was formed to develop strategy for DUA/UI Online Modernization. A presentation was given to Governor Baker, and it was determined that DUA did need to replace the current system. In 2020 the project was put on pause due to the pandemic. In 2021, the EMT project was restarted and a vendor, FAST Enterprises was selected. A contract was signed with FAST Enterprises in June of 2022.

Mr. Jeffers explained why DUA is working on the EMT program. The vision for this program is to create a public workforce system that supports the entire life cycle of “job-loss to job-gain” for constituents. DUA’s goal is to provide outstanding service to the citizens and businesses of Massachusetts. This can be achieved by:

- Providing an improved and widely accessible customer experience online, by phone and in person.
- Deliver timely and accurate benefits, unemployment payments, career services, and job placement assistance.
- Reducing the unemployment insurance (UI) tax burden on citizens and businesses
- Unemployment Insurance is a federal and state partnership. MA DUA’s goal is to become a national leader and improve scores on evaluations by the US Department of Labor.
- Operational efficiency – Improve efficiencies in UI system so EOWLD staff can focus on timely and high-quality service delivery.
- DUA’s goal is to ensure that data and reporting are accurate and timely and can respond to all stakeholders’ needs.

Mr. Jeffers reviewed a timeline of where DUA is with the EMT project.

Phase I – Tax phase

The Revenue side of the new system is being configured first. The next stage of this phase is development. Development is currently being worked on and is almost complete. Testing is also underway and the development of training content. The go live date for the Revenue side of the system is projected for June 2023. This will impact employers and Third-Party Administrators. This will not affect the benefits side or claimants. That side of the system will be beginning the updating process during the next phase of the project, starting at the end of the summer.

Testing – internal and external Third-Party Administrators will have the opportunity to test out the new program. TPAs have been invited to participate in testing. Contracted with a company to test usability as well as accessibility. Testing will begin in April and continue for six weeks. That will determine if the program will be rolled out on time, or any improvements need to be made.

Walk throughs with managers are being conducted now. Training will begin in April via video recording and continue through the projected rollout/go live date of June.

Mr. Jeffers explained the known changes that are being communicated to employers and TPA's. Changes that are being communicated are the website address of Employer Portal, authentication methods, employer portal screens and menus, and bulk file processing. Items that are staying the same are bulk filing, Movelt credentials and locations, Wage and Payment Bulk File formats, and all benefit functions. After the program is rolled out in June and over the next sixteen months, DUA will determine how well TPA's and Employers are interacting with the benefit functions.

There were no questions regarding the presentation.
Motion to adjourn. Meeting adjourned.

Next Meeting:

Thursday April 20, 2023, 9:30 – 11:30 AM [note: This meeting was cancelled because there was no quorum, next meeting Thursday, May 18, 2023]