



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

MAURA HEALEY  
GOVERNOR

KIM DRISCOLL  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

LAUREN E. JONES  
SECRETARY

KATIE DISHNICA  
DIRECTOR

**DUA ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING**

Thursday May 18, 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 March 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 regarding the EMT project. At the last advisory council meeting Rick Jeffers, Executive Sponsor of UI Transformation, gave a presentation on the EMT project. The EMT project is still on time and on budget. No changes to report.

The second update is regarding staffing. Mark Costello has accepted the role as the new Chief of Staff at DUA. He started the position on Monday, May 15. David Gold is officially the Chief Counsel at DUA. He was previously Acting Chief Counsel. DUA is still searching for a Director of Revenue. The position will be reposted on LinkedIn. If anyone would like to share the posting with their network, let Katie know, and she will email you the information. It is also listed on the Mass Careers site.

The third update is regarding hybrid work. DUA has gone back to in person work on a hybrid basis. EMT /REC Center have previously been in person throughout the pandemic. This is the first week everyone is back in the office in some way. In order to add value, employees report in office with their respective departments. DUA is now operating out of all five locations. Springfield, Lawrence, the Re-Employment Center, Brockton, and 100 Cambridge. The Brockton building was built with feedback from Rick Jeffers and Wendy Savary. Wendy has given tours for people who are interested in seeing the building. If you are interested in seeing the Brockton office reach out to Wendy. DUA is very proud of the building and excited it is finally being used.

The fourth update is that a presentation about the unemployment process was given to the House of Representatives. The Constituent Services team met with legislative aides to educate them on the unemployment process and the resources available. Mark Costello gave a great presentation outlining the unemployment process and how a claim is filed. If anyone is interested in the presentation, please reach out to Katie or Mark. At the meeting, Mavis Smith, Director of Constituent Services was honored with a picture signed by members of the house. The meeting was very successful

### **UI trust fund**

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

[mass.gov/info-details/unemployment-insurance-trust-fund-uitf](https://mass.gov/info-details/unemployment-insurance-trust-fund-uitf).

Monthly reports are with data visualizations now. This allows the department to provide more information than is traditionally available. YTD tab and historical data have been added. The April 2023 balance remains over 3 billion. YTD through April \$198.9 million, \$759 million in benefit payments, 323,000 initial and continuing claims. Projections have not been updated. The next quarterly report is in August.

### **Discussion**

Next meeting June 15, 2023, 9:30 – 11:30 AM. Please let Sara or Katie know if you are unable to attend the meeting.

### **Questions**

Christopher Carozzi asked about the high number of fraud claims that were filed. What resources are available to direct members to?

DUA is in the process of amending those numbers. The numbers that you are seeing of claims that have been filed are attempts. There is a multi-layered approach to fraud. A small number of the claims have been allowed to go through. Identity issues are placed on the claim, and the claimant's identity is verified through our vendor id.me or the Program Integrity Department.

Massachusetts is a state that is targeted for fraudulent claims due to the fact that Massachusetts offers a high weekly benefit rate. DUA is constantly learning and changing its process to deal with fraud claims. The reports will be amended. Numbers will be adjusted to reflect fraud claims. DUA has given guidance to employers on how to deal with fraud claims. On the mass.gov site there is a form that claimants can complete to self-report fraud.

[mass.gov/forms/unemployment-fraud-reporting-form](https://mass.gov/forms/unemployment-fraud-reporting-form)

Meeting adjourned

**Next meeting June 15, 2023, 9:30 – 11:30 AM**