

DUA ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING

October 20, 2022

MINUTES

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

EOLWD/DWD/DUA/Public Attendees: Connie Carter, David Gold, John Saulnier, Marie-Lise Sobande, Katie Dishnica, Wendy Savary, Jeannie Pena, Mavis Smith, Jason Salgado, Meaghan Tucker, Sara Bahrehmand, Victoria Ireton, Rena Kottcamp, Emma Hornsby, Lisa Hammerle

A virtual meeting was held via Webex.

Motion was proposed to approve the September 2022, meeting minutes

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

Executive update

Acting Director Carter provided a program update on DUA. DUA's workloads are returning to pre-pandemic levels or below, except with appeals, where there is still a high workload level, but appeals are on schedule for what is projected in order to resolve that workload.

Acting Director Carter also reviewed the increase in the Weekly Benefit Amount for new Unemployment Insurance claims. Effective October 2, 2022, the maximum weekly benefit amount has been increased by \$41 to \$1015. It was previously \$974.

Mr. Gold explained that DUA was not ready to discuss changes to DUA's waiver regulations. Discussions are still ongoing as to the timing of presenting them to the council. The expanded emergency regulations for overpayment waivers ended on October 15th. Mr. Gold explained that DUA had a successful outreach program with overpaid claimants.

Mr. Carlozzi asked for an update on the number of people that took advantage of the expanded waiver regulations and applied for an overpayment waiver. Mr. Gold provided numbers.

Mr. Drinkwater asked why the emergency regulations for overpayments are not permanent and expressed his preference of making them permanent. Mr. Larson also expressed his preference for the full set of overpayment regulations. It was also mentioned the preference to continue to put overpayment collections on hold and to not intercept the tax refunds of constituents. Mr. Gold explained that collections have already been on hold for two years due to the pandemic and it was DUA's position to resume collections.

Mr. Marlin explained that the governor will be issuing tax rebates to constituents in the next thirty days or so and asked if tax intercept collections could be put on hold during this time. Katie Dishnica, Chief of Staff, explained that tax intercept notices have already been sent to claimants but that their taxes will not be intercepted next week. The process that DUA follows is to send a notice to the claimant, the claimant can request a review of the overpayment and apply for a waiver. The tax intercept file to send to the Department of Revenue is not actually prepared until end of December or early January. Mr. Marlin is concerned that the time frame that DUA has to respond to the Department of Revenue will expire before the rebates are issued to constituents. The concern has been noted.

UI trust fund

Lisa Hammerle, Department of Economic Research, provided update and link for the October 2022 report (<https://lmi.dua.eol.mass.gov/LMI/UnemploymentInsuranceTrustFund>).

Meeting adjourned.

Next meeting: November 17, 2022, 9:30am -11:30am [note: this meeting was cancelled because of quorum issues. The December 15, 2022 meeting was also cancelled]. **The next scheduled meeting is Thursday, January 19, 2023, 9:30am-11:30am.**