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Dept. of Workforce Development: Continues customer service enhancements

Posted on Tuesday, Jul 5, 2022

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MADISON – As part of the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development's continued efforts to meet the needs of customers and enhance online services, the online unemployment claimant portal and initial claim application are now available in Spanish.

Spanish-speaking claimants benefit from the improved access to:

- File an initial claim application any time the system is available.
- View UI initial claim information.
- Update payment and withholding information.
- File an appeal.
- Print benefit summary statements.
- Enroll for and view secure messages.
- Set a language preference for communication and receive translated documents.

"This important accomplishment reflects ongoing efforts to increase the accessibility of DWD's services and online materials for all users, including individuals with limited English proficiency and people with disabilities," said DWD Secretary-designee Amy Pechacek. "The translation project dovetails nicely with other efforts to expand use of plain language in UI documents. Additional progress will be shared in the weeks and months ahead."

Claimants may access the Spanish version of the claims portal by selecting the "Español" link on the logon page.

Previously, the department only provided access to these services to people whose preferred language is not English through in-person or phone interpretation. Filing online UI weekly claims in Spanish has been available since 2017.

Assistance will be provided by telephone if claimants need help using online services by calling (414) 435-7069 or toll-free (844) 910-3661 during normal business hours (an interpreter will be provided at no cost). Learn more about Unemployment Benefits for Claimants.

Other recent customer service enhancements to DWD's websites and materials include:

- DWD's online chat service for Job Service, Mattie Moo, has moved into a support role for individuals filing UI claims and seeking other assistance, allowing users to gain access to vital information more quickly and get their questions answered in real-time. Mattie Moo has been implemented on key UI Internet webpages and is available in Spanish and Hmong.
- DWD unveiled an upgraded UI claims portal that features better functionality and new features, including secure document upload, a message center for direct communication from claims specialists and adjudicators, text notifications, a mobile friendly design, and the option to request accommodations related to a disability for an appeal.
- DWD made it easier to file for UI benefits by updating the language for both its initial and weekly UI claim applications to feature "plain language" as much as possible.
- DWD continues expanded call center hours and staffing to assist individuals with questions regarding their unemployment claim or process. UI also unveiled a cloud-based Customer Contact Center that features a virtual agent that can answer frequently asked questions after business hours in English, Spanish, and Hmong.
- DWD's Equal Rights Division (ERD) now accepts online applications for the department's most common civil rights and labor standards complaints, such as on wage claims, fair employment, housing, public accommodations, and state FMLA. ERD also offers downloadable versions of these complaint forms in Spanish.
- The launch of an interactive directory on the state's JobCenterofWisconsin.-com website allows Wisconsinites to connect with workforce services through contacts in their local area.
- New enhancements to the Workers' Compensation litigated case portal allow

documents to be securely uploaded into the portal.

Through the support of the United States Department of Labor's Tiger Team grant, DWD has also begun implementing four new projects designed to promote equitable access, improve responsiveness, and ensure timely payment of benefits while also preventing and detecting fraud committed against the UI program. DWD is also partnering with United Migrant Opportunity Services to support improved access for those shown to face barriers to UI benefit receipt with the support of USDOL's UI Navigator Grant. DWD's ongoing UI modernization efforts are designed to fix back-end system issues that can delay payments and improve the user experience by making the process easier to navigate.

WISCONSIN UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE CELEBRATES MILESTONE

Wisconsin recently celebrated a historic 90th anniversary. Wisconsin's Unemployment Insurance (UI) program was developed in 1932, the first of its kind in the United States. Wisconsin's program was the basis for the national UI law that followed a few years later in 1935.