

Dept. of Workforce Development: Continues consumer service improvements with updated UI claimant handbook

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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 Unemployment Insurance (UI) Claimant Handbook has been updated.

The newly published [Claimant Handbook](#) was redesigned to be easier for claimants to read and understand. Among the changes:

- UI jargon was removed.
- The layout was updated.
- Pictures and links were added.

Information was added to the Claimant Assistance Line, (414) 435-7069 or toll-free (844) 910-3661, as well as to the [Claimant Portal](#) with a general message to make claimants aware of these updates.

The updated handbook was published in English, Spanish and Hmong.

“As part of our ongoing efforts to enhance services, the new Claimant Handbook makes it easier for claimants to understand complicated programs, find answers easily, and locate pertinent information,” said DWD Secretary-designee Amy Pechacek. “The translations also reflect our priority to serve customers from diverse communities.”

Publication of the new handbook follows other recent and ongoing modernization

efforts including:

- A new benefits estimator tool that is part of a comprehensive [UI System overhaul](#) and among numerous modernization efforts underway throughout DWD. DWD's ongoing UI modernization efforts are designed to fix UI information technology system issues to improve speed and accuracy in benefit payments and improve the user experience by making the system easier to navigate.
- A new [UI dashboard](#) that provides insight into the strength of Wisconsin's economic recovery from the COVID-19 downturn and transparency around claims volume, benefits paid, and call response time.
- Expanded support by DWD's online chatbot Mattie Moo. Originally focused on 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 English, Spanish and Hmong.
- 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.
- Enhancements that make it easier to file for UI benefits by updating the language for both the initial and weekly UI claim applications. These applications now feature "plain language" as much as possible.
- A partnership with Google Cloud that involved development of algorithms to help evaluate claims and speed up overall response time. Improvements also were made to screen out fraudulent claims so that the UI program could be administered - with integrity - to Wisconsinites who needed financial assistance.
- A new [online research portal](#) from the Equal Rights Division that allows users to view and filter data including successful mediation statistics and types of equal rights complaints received by law, basis, and county.
- Other agency-wide improvements include enhancements to the [JobCenterofWisconsin.com](#) website, major translation initiatives and introduction of a helpful chatbot named Mattie Moo as a supplement to the call center.

Through these and other solutions, 84.7% of regular weekly UI claims are now paid within one to three days of filing.

For the pandemic period of March 15, 2020, to Sept. 24, 2022, DWD paid out a total of \$7.47 billion in UI benefits to 700,531 claimants.

In addition to providing relief to individuals and their families, the funds have supported local businesses and communities, stabilizing the state's economy.