

Dept. of Workforce Development: Unemployment insurance division releases new data dashboard

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MADISON – As upgrades to Wisconsin’s Unemployment Insurance system continue, the Department of Workforce Development has released a new data dashboard that improves access to current and historical data on UI activity.

“Wisconsin’s unemployment insurance system was the first in the nation (1932) to provide temporary support to workers who lose jobs through no fault of their own and today, increased analytical capabilities are critical as DWD modernizes and improves customer service,” said DWD Secretary-designee Amy Pechacek. “The new data dashboard enhances transparency and provides historical context about claims.”

Unemployment insurance was developed to strengthen the state’s economic competitiveness by maintaining a stable and skilled workforce. Employers pay premiums into the insurance system, while benefits are paid to qualified workers as they seek other employment. In addition to supporting workers and their families during job transitions, unemployment insurance benefits counteract economic downturns and protect all businesses as workers use the benefits to cover housing, food, and other expenses.

The new UI dashboard provides insight into the strength of Wisconsin’s economic recovery from the COVID-19 downturn. For example, the new dashboard shows how the claim volume during 2020 eclipsed the past 36 years, including the years known as the “Great Recession,” and how the recovery has reduced the number of unemployed people filing claims.

The tool also tracks calls. From May 1, 2022 through May 7, 2022, UI answered 7,894 calls compared to a 52-week rolling average of 28,429 phone calls. This is in comparison to the over 60,000 calls that UI answered in the same week a year earlier.

The new dashboard is among several modernization efforts underway at DWD. Other recent and ongoing efforts include:

- A partnership with Google Cloud to develop 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.
- Adoption of Document AI to streamline paper applications. The DocAI solution enables documents to be submitted online instead of by fax or hard-copy mail. The tool rapidly extracts critical data from documents, saving time, and removing manual processes, which allows employees to focus on high-priority activities.
- A contract with [NICE CXone](#) that improved the customer contact platform.
- Integration of “[plain language](#)” on UI applications and other forms as well as an [upgraded claims portal](#) that features a message center for direct communication from claims specialists and adjudicators, text notifications, as well as a mobile-friendly design.
- A \$16.5 million [UI modernization contract with Madison-based Flexion](#) to transition away from the legacy mainframe through phased software solutions. The contract is part of a larger, multi-year investment to build a more adaptable system using a combination of off-the-shelf software, cloud-based solutions, and custom software development.
- 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 the solutions already in progress, DWD is now paying 84% of regular weekly UI claims within one to three days of filing. For the pandemic period of March 15, 2020 to May 14, 2022, DWD has paid out a total of \$7.4 billion in UI benefits to 691,000 claimants. In addition to providing relief to these individuals and their families, the funds have supported local businesses and communities, stabilizing the state’s economy.

Find the new dashboard on the [UI Activity page](#).