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Unemployment Insurance ADVISORY COMMITTEE



Employment Security Department
WASHINGTON STATE

Agenda



- I. Approval of Jan. 26, 2024 meeting minutes
- II. Rulemaking Update
- III. Legislative Session Updates
- IV. Adverse Impacts Research
- V. Public comment
- VI. Adjourn

Rule Making

Stephanie Frazee, Legislation and Rules Coordinator, ESD



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Rulemaking



- **Wildfires and Other Disasters** – Formally adopted permanent rules on February 20, and they will be effective on March 22.
- **Expanded Voluntary Quits (HB 1106)** – Officially proposed rules with definitions of “family member” consistent with PFML definitions and incorporating updates from the bill that are effective September 3, 2023. Held hearing on December 8, 2023. Working on formally adopting rules.
- Also working on drafting rules incorporating quitting due to inaccessible care for a child or vulnerable adult and defining a split shift.

Rulemaking



- **Transportation Network Companies (HB 1570)** – Working on drafting rules concerning relief of benefit charges for part-time workers and potential other rules needed to implement bill.
- **Cross-Program Payment Allocation** – Draft rules sent out for comment on February 8. Comments are due March 1.
- **WAC 192-220-070 Cross Reference Clean Up**– Hearing will be held on April 12, 2024, at 9:00 a.m.

Legislation update

Caitlyn Jekel, Government Relations Director, ESD



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Legislation update



Agency request legislation

HB 1975

Pandemic-era overpayment interest

Passed the Senate

Waives interest accrued on pandemic-era overpayment interest (Feb 2020 – Sept 2021). Interest on these overpayments will not resume until Jan 1, 2025.

HB 1898

Benefit Charging

Senate Rules Committee

Cleans up the benefit charging statutes for clarity. Does not make substantive changes.

HB 1901

Voluntary Contributions

Senate Rules Committee

Removes the sunset to temporary changes to voluntary contributions program from 2021:

- Removed the 10% surcharge
- Reduced the amount of the contribution required to participate.



Legislation update



Bills we are tracking

HB 1095 and 5109

Creating a wage replacement program for workers excluded from unemployment insurance

Did not advance out of fiscal committee

Study funding included in Senate Supplemental Operating Budget

HB 1893

Concerning unemployment insurance benefits for striking or lockout workers

Senate Rules Committee

House amendments include:

- Changes from social to experience rate charging
- Limited to 4 weeks of payable benefits
- Prohibits payment if determined not legal
- Establishes overpayment if back paid

HB 2230

Economic Security for All (EcSA)

Senate Rules Committee

Adverse Impacts Research

Brendan Moore, Operations Research Specialist, ESD



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Adverse Impacts Research



- ESD received American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds from USDOL's UI Equity Grant
- USDOL's Goal: "Promote Equitable Access to UI Programs"
 - *"**Equitable access** means that state UI agencies are ensuring that all individuals have an effective and meaningful opportunity to obtain the benefits to which they are entitled" (pg. 4, UIPL 01-24)*
 - *"**Declining UI reciprocity is an equity issue...** low reciprocity has been particularly difficult for historically marginalized groups that experience high rates of unemployment." (pg. 2, UIPL 01-24)*
- USDOL recommends evaluating *"What targeted improvements and affirmative outreach may improve reciprocity rates between different groups? What barriers are preventing claimants from successfully filing for benefits?" (pg. 15, UIPL 01-24)*



Adverse Impacts Research



- **Problem Statement:** Marginalized workers may not apply for UI benefits because of *inequitable access*.
 - E.g., they do not know about the program, whether they are eligible, how to apply, or the benefits of doing so.
- **Research Question:** Can we increase access to UI among marginalized communities by providing timely information about the program?
- **Outreach:** Notify workers about UI benefits shortly after experiencing a job loss
 - Use ESD's wage records to identify workers with stable employment who then experience a sudden and significant drop in hours during most recent quarter
 - Target low-wage workers in industries with historically lower take-up
 - Must not be near retirement age or receiving UI/PFML
 - Send letter with information about UI program with language from ESD's website



Adverse Impacts Research



Timeline:

- March 13, 2024 – **Pilot** (use 2023Q4 records)
- Mid-May – **Main Wave #1** (use 2024Q1 records)
- Mid-August – **Main Wave #2** (use 2024Q2 records)
- Analysis takes place from April-November 2024

Public Comment



- If you would like to make public comment, please state your name and spell it so we can capture it correctly for the minutes, as well as the organization you represent if any.
- **Reminder:** Your comments are being recorded.
- If you would like your comments to be included in the meeting minutes, please submit them in writing via email to Camille Galeno at camille.galeno@esd.wa.gov. *(Camille's email will be posted in the chat)*
- Please limit your comments to **two minutes**.

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