**Employment Security Advisory Committee**

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| **Meeting details** |
| **Meeting date:** Wednesday, July 25, 2018  **Meeting time:** 10:00 to 11:35 a.m.  **Location:** Employment Security Department Maple Park Building, Maple Leaf Room   |  |  | | --- | --- | | **Committee members present** | **Committee members absent** | | * Bob Battles * Mark Johnson * Joe Kendo | * Larry Brown * Mike Gempler | | * Hilliary Bryan on behalf of Linda Nguyen |  | | * Mark Riker |  | | * Anne Paxton on behalf of John Tirpak |  | |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | **ESD staff present** | | | * Nick Streuli | * Janelle Guthrie | | * Julie Lord * Deborah Brookshire * Denice Craig | * Chad Pearson * Bianca Stoner * Curt Wilson | |
| **Summary** |
| **Update on Unemployment Insurance Customer Support Activities**  Julie Lord, Director of ESD’s Unemployment Insurance Customer Support (UICS) group, gave an update on UICS activities.  The volume of incoming calls from claimants is normally higher during the peak season (November through March) than the rest of the year. However, last year UICS experienced an even higher-than-normal volume of calls during the peak season, as well as an unusually high average wait time.  There were many potential contributing factors: UICS was using a new system, some claimants were creating duplicate work by contacting ESD electronically and then calling, and UICS was taking calls only on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays so that they could focus on electronic paperwork on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Although there’s no way to know exactly what caused the large number of calls and the long average wait times, the wait times were simply too long. As a result, UICS knew that they needed to make some changes.  To address the issue, UICS is hiring 30 additional staff who will answer basic questions, triage incoming calls, and schedule call-backs at times that are convenient to claimants instead of simply calling people back at random times. In addition, UICS is hiring 12 additional intake staff to handle claims calls. The division has also revised the eligibility determination letters to make them easier to understand, and has started partnering with WorkSource to assist claimants who ask WorkSource staff for help with claim problems. Claimants will also be able to request callbacks without having to wait on the hotline, and UICS may start providing services outside of traditional customer service hours, such as on Saturdays or before 8 a.m. on weekdays. Julie said that UICS will make the changes, determine which changes are working and which aren’t, then make futher adjustments as necessary.   In addition to these changes, UICS is also is discontinuing the use of paper benefit checks. Although people who are currently receiving paper benefit checks will be able to continue, as of August 1st, new claimants must choose between receiving their unemployment insurance benefit payments through direct deposit or by debit card.   UICS is also making some improvements to the services that it provides to employers and is working to increase awareness of what constitutes unemployment insurance fraud. Julie also gave an overview of the work that ESD’s Office of Special Investigations is doing to prevent and detect unemployment insurance fraud.  **Overview of ESD partnerships**  Janelle Guthrie (ESD’s Communications Director), Chad Pearson (ESD’s Communications Business Outreach Manager) and Curt Wilson (ESD’s Marketing and Multimedia Manager) gave an update on the agency’s partnerships with several outside companies such as Amazon and Linkedin.  ESD is currently partnering with Amazon on the Career Choice program. Through this program, Amazon reimburses new warehouse employees for education expenses up to $12,000 over a four-year period for training they receive in a high-demand field.  In addition, ESD is currently partnering with Linkedin through the National Association of State Workforce Professionals. Through this partnership, when employers post jobs on WorkSourceWA.com, all state job bank openings are available to all Linkedin users. Linkedin also provides special benefits for veterans, including a one-year free Premium membership and Linkedin Learning.  ESD has recently created several microsites on the ESD website with background information about working in specific industries such as hospitality and retail, and is currently working on an apprenticeship microsite. Mark Riker expressed interest in contributing to that microsite, and Chad Pearson agreed to follow with him after the ESAC meeting to discuss this. |
| **Upcoming meetings** |

The remaining meetings for 2018 are both at the Employment Security headquarters in Olympia and are on:

* Tuesday, August 21, 2018 from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m.
* Wednesday, October 24 from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.