

A photograph showing the silhouettes of several people standing around a table in a meeting room, with a bright light source creating a lens flare effect. The image is used as a background for the top left portion of the slide.

# Unemployment Insurance ADVISORY COMMITTEE



**Employment Security Department**

WASHINGTON STATE

# Agenda



- I. Approval of Feb. 23, 2024 meeting minutes
- II. Rulemaking Update
- III. Legislative Session wrap-up
- IV. Legislative Reports
- V. Service Delivery Update
- VI. Web Modernization
- VII. SHB 2308 Job Titles Project Update
- VIII. Pandemic Overpayments
- IX. Public comment
- X. Adjourn

# Rule Making

Stephanie Frazee, Legislation and Rules Coordinator, ESD



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# Rulemaking



- **Failure to Respond** – Working on update to WAC 192-140-035 to address both disqualification and ineligibility for failure to respond. CR 101 was sent out March 22. Comments are due on April 12.
- **Expanded Voluntary Quits (HB 1106)** – Formally adopted definitions of family members consistent with PFML definitions and incorporated updates from the bill that are effective September 3, 2023. New rule language will be effective on March 31, 2024.
- Also working on drafting rules incorporating quitting due to inaccessible care for a child or vulnerable adult and defining a split shift. Draft rules should be published soon.

# 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 on February 8. Working on drafting the CR 102 and scheduling the rulemaking hearing, likely in late May.
- **WAC 192-220-070 Cross Reference Clean Up**– Hearing will be held on April 12, 2024, at 9:00 a.m.

# Legislation wrap-up

Caitlyn Jekel, Government Relations Director, ESD



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# Legislation wrap-up



HB 1975	Overpayment Interest	Eliminates interest charged on unemployment benefit overpayments resulting during the pandemic period – Feb. 2, 2020, through Sept. 4, 2021. Interest will not accrue on those overpayments until January 1, 2025.
HB 1898	Benefit Charging	Amends statute regarding when employers receive relief of benefit charges to help the statute better reflect the agency's current policies and practices.
HB 1901	Voluntary Contributions	Eliminates the sunset on provisions that make the voluntary contribution program more accessible to more employers



# Legislation wrap-up



Op Budget Sec. 225(37)	Apprenticeship training materials	Develop and deploy training to assist apprentices and apprentice advocate groups in filing claims and navigating the unemployment insurance system.
Op Budget Sec. 225(44)	Wage Replacement Program Workgroup	To convene a wage replacement program for undocumented workers' work group and report findings.  Report due Nov. 15, 2024.
Op Budget Sec 225(43)	Demographic Data	Research and report on how ESD could collect race and ethnicity data on workers from employers in UI and PFML wage reporting.  Report due June 30, 2025.



# Legislative Reports



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Stephanie Sams, UICS Policy & Legislative Implementation Manager, ESD

# Legislative Reports



Impact of the Minimum Weekly Benefit Amount		Annually until Dec. 2025	Dec. 1, 2023 Dec. 1, 2024
Work Search Requirements		Bi-annually (even years)	Jul. 1, 2024
ESD Financial Report		Annually	Oct. 15, 2024
Federal Funding Shortfall	Op Budget Sec. 225(25)(b)	Two (final)	Nov. 1, 2024
Wage replacement program for undocumented workers	Op Budget Sec. 225(44)	One-time	Nov. 15, 2024

# Legislative Reports



Collecting Race & Ethnicity Data	Op Budget Sec 225(43)	One-time	June 30, 2025
Use of Standard Occupation Code (SOC) data and educational investments	HB 2308 – 2019	One-time	Nov. 1, 2026
Expanded Voluntary Quits – inaccessibility of care	ESHB 1106 – 2023	One-time	Nov. 1, 2028

# Legislative Reports



Nov. 2023 Federal Funding Shortfall Report started the work that will be continued this year. It stated -

To address long-term sustainability of the state's UI program, various state funding options could be considered:

- Reducing non-UI program reliance on CPP and P&I funding through alternative funding sources, such as competitive discretionary grants
- Ongoing appropriation of general fund-state to support administration of the UI program; and
- Increase of revenue collected through state P&I or CPP accounts.

# Service delivery update

JR Richards, UI Customer Service Director, ESD



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# Service Delivery Update



Metric	2019	2023	% change
Average UI claims staff	245	223	- 9%
Number of continuing UI claims	1,246,106	1,289,118	+ 3%
Incoming call volume	565,340	1,114,982	+ 97%
Identity issues set	5,295	105,073	+ 1,884%

# Service Delivery Update



## Root Cause issues

### ■ Consumer behavior:

- 25% of customers apply for benefits over the phone instead of using the online services
- 48% of claims are being accessed by a mobile device, but the site is not mobile-friendly

### ■ Service delivery model requires some degree of self-service:

- During peak season, to address each unique claimant seeking service by phone would require an addition 135 FTE to be deployed to phones

### ■ Reduced FTE since pre-pandemic:

- Pandemic overpayment hiring
- Re-classification and per-FTE costs have reduced headcount to budget

### ■ Identity fraud and complex financial crimes were minimal pre-pandemic. Identity issues are ~70% of our fraud team's workload.

# Service Delivery Update



## Immediate actions to address backlog:

- Deploying overtime hours in UI adjudication team, fraud management, tax & wage
- Implementing in-person identity verification option in WorkSource offices with 24 -72 hour processing time once received.
- Expanding the role of UI Ambassadors in WorkSource offices to offer more in-person support available in communities.
- Contract with LexisNexis to clear lowest-risk claimants awaiting identity verification.
- Continued overtime for UI and fraud teams.
- 2024 budget request based on updated staffing model.



# Next steps



- In-depth business analysis to support funding strategy across the agency
- Executive leadership strategic planning Mid-April
- Decision Package submitted to OFM/Gov Sept.
- Financial Report Oct. and Federal Funding Shortfall report Nov.
- Continued engagement with UIAC at subsequent meetings throughout this time

# Website Modernization Project: Enhancing User Experience and Accessibility

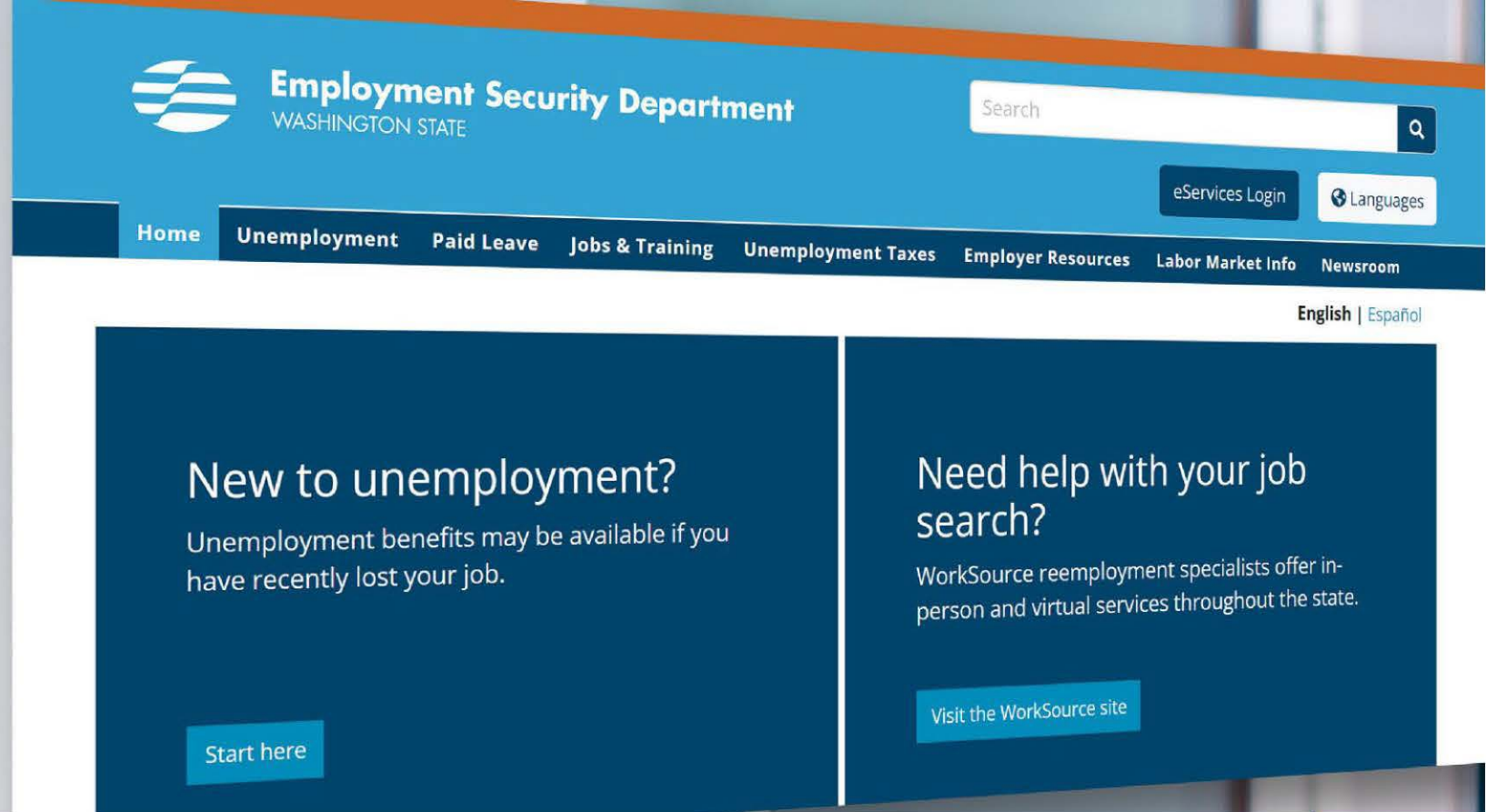
Jeremy Satre, Change Manager, ESD



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# ESD.WA.GOV

is our front door!

Create a digital, self-serve experience that removes barriers and welcomes users with warmth, compassion and support for all Washingtonians.

ESD.WA.GOV - WEB MOD PROJECT

Finding  
a contact  
number  
can be like...







Finding specific information  
can be like...



# Project vision

- Make it simple to get things done.
- Increase access to ESD services through better usability and simple, less legalese, plain-talk content.
- Focus on what customers need and are looking for when they come to us.
- Be helpful and friendly, but professional.



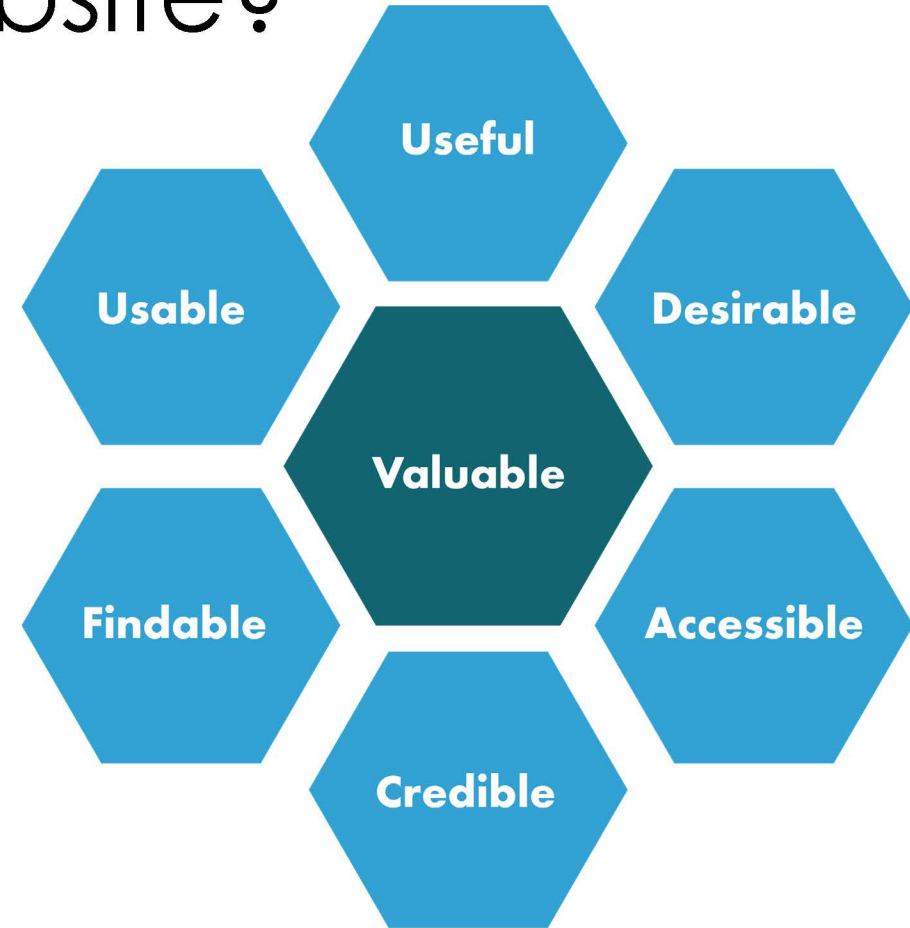
# Redesign

## Website redesign goals

- Equity
- Self-service for customers through better usability
- Refreshed look and feel
- Accessibility through information that is easier to find and understand
- Reduce from 1700+ pages to 650 pages

# What makes a good website?

- Intuitive navigation
- Strong visual design and layout
- Responsive design
- Accurate and relevant content
- Clear calls to action





# Next up: What we'll do together in 2024

**May** Minimum Viable Product (MVP) content finalized.

**June** Usability and accessibility testing.

**July** Internal & external user acceptance testing:  
Gather feedback from ESD community.  
Soft launch: Roll out to key stakeholders

**September:** Public-facing launch: The grand reveal to customers, media and all internal staff.

# SHB 2308 Job Titles Project Update



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Stephanie Sams, UICS Policy & Legislative Implementation Manager, ESD

# Job Titles Project Update (SHB 2308)



- 2020 legislation, went into effect in 2021
- Standard occupational classification (SOC) or job title
- Delayed enforcement
- Extensive Outreach
  - Webinars
  - New Employer Orientation
- ESD employee training

# Pandemic Overpayments



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JR Richards, Unemployment Insurance Customer Support Director, ESD

# Pandemic Overpayments



## Phase 1 - Overpayment Blanket and Administrative Waivers

21,364

# Customers

\$13.4M

Amount Waived

## Phase 2 - Overpayment Waivers Approved to Date

26,089

# Customers

\$60.4M

Amount Waived

## Phase 2 - Overpayment Waivers Denied to Date

1,096

# Customers

\$2.4M

Amount Denied

## Phase 2 - Waiver Applications Received to Date

46,788

# Submitted  
Applications to Date

28,974

# Completed Applications

17,814

# Pending Applications

\$136M

Amount of Pending  
Applications

97%

% of all Waiver Applications  
Approved



# Pandemic Overpayments



- Outreach
  - Outbound Calls to ~8k Claimants with high dollar OPs.
  - Email and letter communications to individuals who experienced pandemic-era overpayments and have not responded to prior outreach.
  
- Reviewing remaining pandemic overpayments
  - Consider information on file .
  - Goal to close out project.

# 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](mailto:camille.galeno@esd.wa.gov). *(Camille's email will be posted in the chat)*
- Please limit your comments to **two minutes**.

A photograph showing the silhouettes of several people standing in a meeting room, illuminated by a bright light source from the left, creating a strong backlight effect. The people appear to be engaged in a discussion or presentation.

# Unemployment Insurance ADVISORY COMMITTEE



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