



# Unemployment Insurance Advisory Committee

## Meeting details

**Date:** Wednesday, June 25<sup>th</sup>, 2025

**Time:** 10:00 am – 12:00 pm

**Location:** Zoom

### Committee members and alternates present

#### Employee Representatives

- John Traynor, Washington State Labor Council
- Brenda Wiest, Teamsters 117

#### Employer Representatives

- Josie Cummings, Avista
- Julia Gorton, Washington Hospitality Association (employer rep)
- Tammy Hetrick, Washington Food Industry Association (alternate employer rep)

#### General Public Representatives

- John Glynn, Washington Workforce Association
- Anne Paxton, Unemployment Law Project

#### ESD staff

- Joshua Dye
- Vaughn Ellis
- Stephanie Frazee
- Gerald Gabbard
- Camille Galeno
- Colin Helsley
- Kennidi Hunsicker
- Reese Hutchison
- Matt LaPalm
- Lawrence Larson
- Marypat Meuli

### Committee members and alternates absent

- Cindy Richardson, UNITE HERE Local 8
- Katie Beeson, Washington Food Industry Association (alternate employer rep)
- Monica Holland, Northwest Justice Project (alternate public rep)
- Lindsey Hueer, Association of Washington Businesses (employer rep)
- Joe Kendo, Washington State Labor Council (alternate employee rep)
- Allyson O'Malley-Jones, Northwest Justice Project (alternate public rep)



- JR Richards
- Steve Ruggles
- Stephanie Sams
- Eve Sheng

## Summary

### Meeting Recorded

This meeting was [recorded](#) and livestreamed by TVW. Please reference this recording for further meeting details and full dialogue using the indicated timestamps.

### Welcome and Opening Remarks

Committee chair JR Richards welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked committee assistant Colin Helsley to call roll.

### Agenda

JR reviewed the following agenda items (also see Addendum I)

- Approval of April 30, 2025, meeting minutes
- Grant Funding Updates
- Legislation Implementation Updates
- Regulatory Review Introduction
- Rulemaking
- Public comment
- Adjourn

### Meeting Minutes

JR requested that committee members review the April 30, 2025, draft UIAC meeting minutes and provide their feedback. Brenda Weist moved to approve the minutes. Josie Cummings seconded the motion. All in favor said “aye”. No members were opposed. The April 30, 2025, meeting minutes were approved.

### Grant Funding Updates

JR Richards, Insurance Services Division Director, ESD, Steve Ruggles, Business Products Manager, ESD, and Stephanie Sams, Policy & Legislative Implementation, ESD provided an update on the grant funding using the following slides.



## Grant funding update: ARPA funding



U.S. Dept of Labor terminated all UI American Rescue Plan Act grants effective May 22

- Equity Grant – period of performance previously ran through March 31, 2026
- UI Integrity Grant – period of performance previously ran through December 31, 2025
- Tiger Team Grant – period of performance previously ran through December 31, 2025
- UI Navigator – period of performance previously ran through June 14, 2025

Grant Name	Total Award	Expenditures through 5/22	Balance as of 5/22
Equity	\$ 6,840,000	\$ 5,720,448	\$ 1,119,552
FY23 Tiger Teams	\$ 432,797	\$ 392,020	\$ 40,777
FY24 Tiger Teams	\$ 4,040,753	\$ 1,513,499	\$ 2,527,254
Integrity	\$ 2,609,000	\$ 1,068,845	\$ 1,540,155
Navigator	\$ 3,000,000	\$ 2,707,007	\$ 292,993
Total	\$ 16,922,550	\$ 11,401,819	\$ 5,520,731

## Grant funding update: ARPA funding



### Projects impacts

- Equity Grant
  - Website modernization: modernizing ESD website; funds were to continue customer facing website optimization
  - Adverse impact and analysis: tested and analyzed impact of sending letters to claimants to increase applications; funds were to complete the analysis
- UI Integrity Grant
  - Integrity trainings: trained staff to improve working knowledge of techniques to ensure integrity of UI Program; funds were for additional trainings in Summer 2025
  - UI fraud prevention: For building or procuring a case management system for managing UI fraud cases (was also partially funded through Tiger Teams)



## Grant funding update – Tiger Team projects



### Tiger Team project impacts

- Intake standard work: designed to modernize and migrate "standard work" documents for the UI Intake team. Project is complete
- UI Handbook updates: update both the unemployed worker and the employer handbooks
- Customer journey mapping: ESD contracted with external entity to conduct customer journey mapping exercise to identify efficiencies and improvements
- How to videos: create "how to" videos to help unemployment claimants navigate the process and requirements to access benefits
- UI Fraud prevention: For building or procuring a case management system for managing UI fraud cases (was also partially funded through Integrity grant)

## Grant funding update – Tiger Team projects Handbooks



### Unemployed Worker Handbook

- ✓ Reduced to 36 pages
- ✓ Available in English, Spanish, Amharic, Chinese, Korean, Russian, Somali, Tigrinya, and Vietnamese
- ✓ Estimated completion is September 1, 2025

### Employer Tax Handbook

- ✓ Reduced to approximately 41 pages
- ✓ Available in English and Spanish
- ✓ Estimated completion is October 1, 2025



## Grant funding update – Tiger Team projects How-to videos



### • How to videos project information:

- All videos are recorded in English and Spanish
  - Closed captioning is available in multiple languages
- All videos also have a one-page written instruction, in both English and Spanish
- All videos are posted to ESD's YouTube channel, are strategically placed on our website and placed within our eServices application

### How to videos created:

- ✓ Apprenticeship: When to apply
- ✓ Apprenticeship: How to apply
- ✓ Apprenticeship: Support tips for managing your benefits
- ✓ Job search requirements
- ✓ Separations – Correctly reporting why you stopped working
- ✓ What you need to know about the adjudication process
- ✓ When to apply for benefits
- ✓ How to file a weekly claim

## Grant funding update – Navigator funding



### Navigator impacts

ESD used these funds to contract with nine community-based organizations to improve access to unemployment benefits for eligible customers.

2025 Operating budget provided \$1 million to continue this program for one year beginning July 1, 2025.

**Recording timestamp 00:16:14**

**Question from Brenda Weist:** Would it be possible to get copies of those handbooks and all of the languages, so that we could utilize them as resources at our Union Hall.

**Answer from JR Richards:** Yes, absolutely. And you know, additionally with the navigator program, we've created a lot of tools and resources through that grant funding. If you connect with us on what are some of the areas of greatest need or question? We probably have additional resources that can



help. Whether it's a video or a 1 pager. We've created a lot of content to help with our community-based organizations who are supporting UI Navigation that can be used.

Brenda Weist acknowledged that Stephanie Sams has partnered with Drivers Union, and she would like the Teamsters 117 to have the printed copies as well.

JR Richards mentioned we can provide handbook to Teamsters 117 also.

**Recording timestamp 00:25:18**

**Question from Brenda Weist:** Do you happen to know off the top of your head who the 9 community organizations are that you use?

Stephanie Sams did not have the answer in the moment. Reese Hutchinson with ESD, provided a link to the answer [How we are helping nonprofits and community partners | Employment Security Department](#)

JR Richards mentioned that there were slides that were used in the past that show coverage such as the organizations, the languages they support, and what the coverage is. Brenda Weist mentioned that she would like to see that again.

Stephanie Sams suggested that outreach efforts and the development of the Navigator program would be a strong topic for a future discussion, once there's more clarity on its direction. They mentioned the possibility of revisiting and reusing a previously shared slide to demonstrate how the initiative has grown beyond its original federally funded pilot. Currently, the program involves nine organizations, many of which are located along the I-5 corridor, with two based in Yakima. Plans are underway to expand the program into other regions such as Spokane, the Tri-Cities, Vancouver, and the Peninsula. Stephanie noted that they're still working through logistical details but highlighted the value of reporting back on how the expansion aligns with the initial goals and intent of the funding.

### **Legislation Implementation Updates**

Matt LaPalm, Product Manager, ESD and Marypat Meuli, Product Manager, ESD provided a legislation implementation update using the following slides.



## Legislation Implementation updates

### ESSB 5041: UI benefits for striking & lockout workers



- Modifies UI disqualification for striking/lockout workers
- Strike/lockout must be allowed by state or federal law
- No benefits paid for up to the first three weeks of a strike/lockout
  - One to two weeks: strike/lockout start date up to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday after the start
  - Then, one waiting week
- Benefits paid up to the next six weeks of strike/lockout
- If retroactive wages are paid, ESD must issue an overpayment to recover benefits
- ESD must notify the separating employer of mediation services available through [PERC](#)
- ESD will determine a separating employer's eligibility to make a voluntary contribution
- ESD must submit 10 annual strike/lockout reports to the Legislature, Dec. 2026 – Dec. 2035
- Effective January 1, 2026
- Expiration December 31, 2035
- [Final bill](#)
- [Final bill report](#)

## ESSB 5041: UI benefits for striking & lockout workers

### Implementation Plan



- Implementation has five main components
  - Rule making
  - Community & stakeholder engagement
  - Software updates
  - External communication (letting workers and employers know what to expect)
  - Internal communication and training (helping staff successfully support customers)
- Current status
  - Work is prioritized in our Unemployment Insurance Portfolio
  - Project team formed
  - Scoping the work to be done
- Effective date Jan 1, 2026



## ESSB 5041: UI benefits for striking & lockout workers Engagement Plan



- Rulemaking
  - Public Comment
- Community Engagement
  - UIAC
  - Stakeholder Listening Sessions
- Targeted & Mass Communications
  - Website updates
  - Employer email campaign
  - Alerts in product(s)

## Legislation Implementation update ESSB 5525: Mass layoffs and business closures



- Employers with 50 or more employees cannot order business closing or mass layoffs without giving 60 days notice.
  - Written notice to ESD, impacted employees and their bargaining representative.
- Provides limited exceptions to notification requirement
  - Seeking capital or business to prevent a layoff, unforeseen business circumstances and natural disasters.
  - Exceptions may apply to all or part of the 60-day notice requirement
- Creates financial liability for employers not meeting notification requirement
  - Includes potential backpay and benefits for each day of violation up to 60 days, and can be reduced by paid wages and benefits during the 60 day period.
  - Employer may be subject to civil penalty of not more than \$500 for each day of violation unless employee wages and benefits are paid.
- Effective July 27, 2025



## ESSB 5525: Mass layoffs and business closures Implementation Plan



- Implementation underway
- Project Objectives:
  - Communicate new requirements to employers & workers
  - Make updates to the existing WARN tracking system to support compliance and operations
  - Establish process for exceptions and for handling potential violations

## ESSB 5525: Mass layoffs and business closures Engagement Plan



- Rulemaking
  - Public Comment
- Community Engagement
  - UIAC
  - Stakeholder Listening Sessions
- Targeted & Mass Communications
  - Website updates
  - Employer email campaign
  - Alerts in product(s)



# Legislation Implementation updates

## Comprehensive UI Technology Roadmap



ESSB 5167 (25-27 Operating Budget) proviso provides \$500,000 for ESD to produce a comprehensive Unemployment Insurance technology roadmap that:

- Addresses IT system challenges
- Makes recommendations for future enhancements
- Identifies costs associated with the recommendations

Recording timestamp 00:36:43

**Question from Brenda Weist:** When will rulemaking and stakeholder listening happen? When can we expect that part to work? It's summer's coming. So, I anticipate people in my organization will want to put this on their calendars.

**Answer from Marypat Meuli:** Stephanie Frazee can speak to the rulemaking part of it. For the community engagement stakeholder, that is something that I will be kicking off. Probably gonna be August. I'm gonna be out of town for a while. But it will be summer just as a just as a heads up.

JR Richards called out an action item for ESD. JR would like to make sure that we're getting the dates for rulemaking and for stakeholder engagement out as early as possible, especially to committee members so they can help work with their colleagues and partners for participation.

Recording timestamp 00:40:07

**Question from Josie Cummings:** Thanks JR yeah, I was just going to emphasize. The sooner we get those dates, the better. We can get more engagement on your end to be helpful. I do have a question regarding process that I'm wondering if it'll be handled in the rulemaking. Do you intend to have a separate process to handle the benefits for striking and lockout workers separate from other claimants, so that when you see an influx, or how do you kind of anticipate on managing when you have an influx of striking workers? And how do you know we don't get off track for folks other claimants that are experiencing unemployment to kind of manage their benefits and process at the same time. That's kind of a big, broad question. I don't expect you to have the answer like right now, but I'm wondering if some of that's going to be worked out in the rulemaking, or if that's kind of a more behind the scenes process that you guys are looking at.

**Answer from Marypat Meuli:** I can say that from a how is it going to work from a customer flow side so that, like we don't have a pipeline of striking workers that somehow delays benefits for everybody else. That if that's kind of what you meant, that will be work that that we're going to be doing as part of the design and the work that we're just starting to figure out how we implement it. So that part of it you know, the air traffic



control and the software side. That's part of what we're designing and being mindful that we don't want it to be you support a new group of customers, and therefore these people don't get support. It's important to think how we like one of the things I'm thinking about is, how do we scale? If there's like a really large strike at one time? Right? We need to be thinking of these scenarios as we design it so that that is not a problem. And we have very little time to implement this. And I like, we're gonna do our best. But we're also gonna be watching and iterating and improving. If we get feedback, that what we're doing isn't working as well as it should.

**Additional answer from Josh Dye:** One thing I'll add is, we've been trying to look looking forward to the potential implementation of this for a while. During some of the labor dispute events over the past year, one of the things that we've kind of kept in the back of our minds is how lessons learned from that can be applied. Assuming this bill were to pass, which it did, and so we are in the process of kind of generally reworking how we handle labor dispute claims. It's been previously kind of a separate process where the policy teams were way, more involved, right, you know, than our normal adjudication path. But we've we are in the process, and we're we of kind of realigning that so that we can work through these a little bit quicker. So all that to say is that yes, what you say is definitely on our mind, and we've been thinking about it for a while. We are hopeful we will stick the landing, but we will not get it right the 1st time. We definitely know this will be an iterative process where the 1st ones we get, we're, gonna you know, learn from, and continue to grow.

**Recording timestamp 00:43:41**

**Question from Brenda Weist:** Maybe this is why I should say, don't worry, we're not planning the general strike to take place for a few years. Just kidding everybody. I don't think there are. I mean, I think the department in all seriousness has on file and the data about how many large employers there are out there that could impact an event of scale. And so I know there's been a lot of apprehension about the implementation of this bill. But there just aren't that many employers of scale that should have the volume to impact the streams of work is my sense of what I know about the labor movement and labor Union members here in Washington State. Am I off the mark here.

**Answer from Josh Dye:** Just broadly speaking, we we're not sure. Because, yeah, as far as like large scale. Yes, but it can also get to a point where more small scales can kind of have a, you know, a cumulative effect. So, we're not sure. One of the things that Marypat mentioned was. you know, the reporting requirements, for this is going to kind of give us a little bit of insight, and we're kind of excited to have that information, especially some of the that 1st year's report of looking back on some of the information. So too soon to tell Brenda we're not sure.

**Recording timestamp 00:54:31**

**Question from Josie Cummings:** A question about this. Do you anticipate having kind of looking at what you've done, and what you've spent already as part of like a comprehensive review of this, or are you kind of just looking forward at what else needs to be fixed.

**Answer from Matt LaPalm:** For sure. We'll look at what is working now and what improvements have the impact the improvements we've made are, it is very much focused on the future. But I think in order to understand what the right level investment is, we have to know how we got here, so I think it will definitely look backwards and forwards with the idea being, the deliverables are very focused on where we need to get to, and the next 5 to 10 years.



## Regulatory Review Introduction

JR Richards, Insurance Services Division Director, ESD provided a regulatory review introduction using the following slides.

### Regulatory Review Introduction



**What:** Systematically review, analyze, stakeholder and update regulations (statutes, rules, policies)

**Why:** Create an inclusive, efficient, and collaborative regulatory environment that ensures equitable access to ESD services, supports business operations, and aligns with broader jurisdictional standards.

**What's Next:** Regulatory Review team established and working to create internal capacity to conduct reviews; created a high-level process; will be begin reviewing prioritized topics

## Rulemaking Update

Stephanie Frazee, Legislation and Rules Coordinator, ESD provided a rulemaking update using the following slides.

### Rulemaking



- **Address Change Requirement** – We are adding an explicit requirement that employers provide their new address to the Department within 30 days after an address change. The final rule was adopted on June 6 and will become effective July 7.
- **CRO Filing** – We are amending our rules to clarify filing requirements with the Commissioner's Review Office. CR 101 has been filed and published. Draft rules will be published soon.
- **Transportation Network Companies** – We are working on rules on quitting for reduction of hours or compensation of 25% or more for TNC drivers and adding a rule on relief of benefit charges for employers who offer part-time work. We are working on the CR 102.



## Public Comments

Before opening the floor to public comment, JR Richards acknowledged a question from Julia Gorton that hadn't been placed on the agenda, offering to discuss it further separately if needed. The question pertained to budget-related changes shared in April, specifically focusing on how the newly signed bill's vetoes affected the Employment Security Department (ESD) and UI funding. JR noted that, although budget experts weren't available, some talking points were provided. JR explained that three significant vetoes impacted ESD, all of which appeared in the 2025 supplemental budget rather than the 2025–2027 biennial budget. Seven additional vetoes in the supplemental budget were implemented to correct technical issues, primarily addressing how fund transfers from the administrative contingency account were written into the bill. These corrections were necessary to maintain intended funding levels for both fiscal year 2025 and the biennium. Josh Dye then clarified that the vetoes were strictly technical fixes with no major impact on services or funding availability; they simply require a rebalancing of internal financial allocations.

JR offered an opportunity for committee members to bring up any topics they would like to discuss before public comments. No committee members brought up any topics they would like to discuss.

JR reminded meeting participants that if they would like their comments captured in the meeting minutes to please email them to [camille.galeno@esd.wa.gov](mailto:camille.galeno@esd.wa.gov).

## 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**.

No public comments were made.

## Adjourned

JR thanked everyone for joining and adjourned the meeting.



**Action Items**

- ESD will provide the handbook to Teamsters 711.
- Add Navigator Program and their outreach as a future agenda item.
- ESD will get dates for rulemaking and for stakeholder engagement out as early as possible, especially to committee members.

**Next meeting**

August 20th, 2025, from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. via Zoom.



## Addendum I



### Agenda

#### Unemployment Insurance Advisory Committee (UIAC)

Wednesday, June 25, 2025 | 10:00 am - 12:00 pm | Via Zoom | 212 Maple Park Ave SE, Olympia, WA 98501

Time	Topic
10:00 am	Welcome from JR Richards, Director, Insurance Services Division, Employment Security Department (ESD) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>o Agenda overview</li></ul>
10:05 am	Approval of April 30, 2025, meeting minutes
10:05 am	Grant funding update – <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• ARPA funding – JR Richards</li><li>• Tiger Team projects – Steve Ruggles</li><li>• Navigator funding – Stephanie Sams</li></ul>
10:45 am	Legislation Implementation updates – Matt LaPalm and Marypat Meuli <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• ESSB 5525: Mass layoffs and business closures</li><li>• ESSB 5041: UI benefits for striking and lockout workers</li><li>• Comprehensive UI Technology Roadmap</li></ul>
11:15 am	Regulatory Review Introduction – JR Richards
11:30 am	Rulemaking – Stephanie Frazee
	Public Comment

For more information, please visit the UIAC website at <https://esd.wa.gov/newsroom/UIAC>

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## Addendum II



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### Unemployment Insurance Advisory Committee

#### January 2025 – December 2025 Meeting Dates

Date	Location	Host	Notes
January 29, 2025 10:00 AM – 11:00 AM	Zoom	ESD	Recorded meeting
February 19, 2025, 2:00 PM – 3:00 PM	Zoom	ESD	Recorded meeting
March 19, 2025, 10:00 AM – 11:00 AM	Zoom	ESD	Recorded meeting
April 30, 2025, 2:00 PM – 3:00 PM	Zoom	ESD	Recorded meeting
June 25, 2025, 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM	Zoom	ESD	Recorded meeting
August 20, 2025, 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM	Zoom	ESD	Recorded meeting
September 17, 2025, 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM	Zoom	ESD	Recorded meeting
October 22, 2025, 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM	Zoom	ESD	Recorded meeting
December 10, 2025, 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM	Zoom	ESD	Recorded meeting

NOTE: Hosts may have the opportunity to present to the committee and bring invited guests as part of our meeting agenda.

Per vote of UI Advisory Committee members, meetings are being recorded as of 08/03/2020 meeting.

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