

Unemployment Insurance Advisory Committee (UIAC) meeting

March 20, 2026



**Employment
Security
Department**
WASHINGTON STATE

Agenda



- I. Approval of Feb. 20, 2026, meeting minutes
- II. Special work session
- III. Legislative updates
- IV. Rulemaking
- V. Job search activities
- VI. Year-over-year claim trends
- VII. Public comment
- VIII. Adjourn

Special work session – April 2026

JR Richards, Insurance Services Director



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Special work session – April 2026



Topic: Legislative report on flexibilities in job search activities

Purpose: The Employment Security Department must submit a report to the Legislature by July 1 that includes space for UIAC input. A special work session is needed for ESD to present the data gathered to date and provide UIAC members an opportunity to discuss the findings and prepare any feedback.

No action or voting is required at this session.

Expected format:

- ESD will provide an overview of the project and present quantitative findings to date
- Time will be reserved for questions and dialogue amongst UIAC members
- Estimated duration: 1 hour
- Public comment will not be taken at this information work session

Next Steps: ESD will follow up with UIAC members to coordinate a meeting date during the last week of April for the special work session.

Legislative updates

Josh Dye, Government Relations Director



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Legislative updates



ESB 6106: ARL Modifying the Washington WARN Act

- Removes tribes from the WA WARN Act's definition of employer
- Excludes the names and addresses of employees from the Public Records Act
- Removes the names and address from the notice sent to all impacted employees (still req'd for ESD notice)

HB 2264: Employer-initiated layoffs

- Clarifies when an employee who volunteers for a layoff is still eligible for unemployment benefits

SSB 5874: UI employer reporting

- Allows Employment Security to waive certain incomplete wage report penalties

SB 6134: Overpayment notifications for striking workers

- Directs Employment Security to notify claimants involved in a strike of the potential for overpayment when receiving backpay.

Rulemaking



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Stephanie Frazee, Legislation & Rules Coordinator

Rulemaking



ESSB 5525 – Securing Timely Notification and Benefits for Laid-off Employees Act

- **Use of Employee Information** – We have proposed rule language clarifying that employee information obtained by the Department will be used to administer the Employment Security Act. We adopted the new rule on February 23, and it will become effective on March 26.
- **Documentation for Exceptions** – We drafted rule language in accordance with Section 7 of the bill, which requires the Department to adopt rules that include documentation requirements for exceptions to the notice requirement. The draft language was published on our website and shared via GovDelivery. Comments were due on March 19.

Rulemaking



- **Registration for Work** - We are working on updating WAC 192-180-005, which addresses claimants registering for work. We are updating the rule to state that claimants must register themselves for work. We have filed the CR 101, and comments were due on March 13.

Job search activities

Stephanie Sams, Policy & Legislative
Manager



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Background



[RCW 50.20.245: Job search monitoring—Report to legislature.](#)

Employment Security “must submit a report to the appropriate committees of the legislature that details the impacts of any flexibilities utilized in claimant job search methods, monitoring, and outcomes. The report must include a section for advisory committee members to respond directly to the contents of the report.”

Due July 1, 2026

2024 Report



- Discussed historical relationship between improper payments and job search errors
- Documented implementation of job search flexibilities
- Outlined potential next steps for 2026 report

2026 Report



Purpose: Evaluate the impacts of flexible job search activities using both quantitative data and qualitative evidence to inform the Legislature’s understanding of claimant behavior, program integrity, and outcomes.

Quantitative analysis under consideration:

- Reciprocity rate
- Denial rate
- Average length of claim
- Improper payment rate
- Characteristics of claimants associated with improper payments

Qualitative analysis under consideration:

- Review of existing research and national studies on work search requirements
- Contextual analysis comparing Washington’s experience with broader trends

Next steps



March-April: data gathering

- Employment Security continues collecting and analyzing quantitative and qualitative data
- Identify emerging themes and gaps for further review

Last week of April: UIAC special work session

May: continued analysis & UIAC coordination

- Refine data and incorporate feedback from the special session
- Engage UIAC members on areas of interest or concern
- Begin drafting narrative components of the report

June: drafting and UIAC review

- Complete full draft of the legislative report
- Prepare UIAC response section
- Internal review and approval
- June 24 final report out for UIAC review and approval

July 1: report due – Submit final report including UIAC’s response to the Legislature

Year-over-year claims trends

JR Richards, Insurance Services Director



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Year-over-year claims trends



Claim Type	2023	2024	2025
Initial Claims	275,251	296,621 (+7.8%)	305,101 (+2.9%)
Weekly Claims	2,778,209	3,270,098 (+17.7%)	3,944,605 (+20.6%)
Federal Claims	1,462	1,687 (+15.4%)	4,009 (+137.6%)

Public comment



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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.
- Please limit your comments to **two minutes**.

Thanks for attending



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Next UIAC meeting: June 24, 2026, 1:30 PM – 3:30 PM