

Meeting Minutes

Unemployment Insurance Advisory Committee

February 20, 2026 | 1:00 p.m. | [Zoom](#) info | 212 Maple Park Ave SE, Olympia, WA 98501

Attendees	
Committee members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JR Richards, Director of Insurance Services and Board Chair • John Traynor, Washington State Labor Council • Brenda Wiest, Teamsters 117 • Julia Gorton, Washington Hospitality Association • Josie Cummings, Avista Corp • James Crandall, Association of Washington Business • Anne Paxton, Unemployment Law Project • John Glynn, Washington Workforce Association
ESD staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Josh Dye, Government Relations Director • Tony Hanson- Chief Financial Officer • Stephanie Frazee, Legislation and Rules Coordinator • Brian Levy, UIB Deputy Director • Dan Zeitlin- Chief of Staff • Todd Dixon- Strategic Operations Manager • Colin Helsley- Host • Kennidi Hunsicker, Management Analyst 3- Co-host • Camille Galeno, Administrative Assistant- Co-host
Committee members absent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cindy Richardson, UNITE HERE Local 8
For more information, please visit the UIAC website at esd.wa.gov/UIAC .	

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 Agenda review

3:30 p.m. Approval of January 30, 2026, meeting minutes

3:35 p.m. Legislative Updates

3:40 p.m. Rulemaking

3:45 p.m. Customer Service Metrics

3:55 p.m. Public comment

4:00 p.m. Adjourn

<p>Approval of Jan. 30, 2026, meeting minutes Motion to approve January 30, 2026, UIAC meeting minutes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John Traynor motions to approve • James Crandell seconds • All members attending are in favor • January 30, 2026, UIAC meeting minutes are approved <p>Highlights Before the committee approved the meeting minutes, JR Richards introduced ESD Chief Financial Officer Tony Hanson.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tony Hanson- New Chief Financial Officer, ESD • On day 4 of working with ESD • Transferred from the Department of Commerce 	<p>Recording timestamp 03:34:37</p>
<p>Legislative Updates-Josh Dye, Government Relations Director SB 6106: ARL Modifying the Washington WARN Act</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removes Tribes from the WA WARN Act's definition on employer • Excludes the names and addresses of employees from the Public Records Act <p>HB 2563: Concerning UI notices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows OAH to provide certain appeal notices electronically <p>SB 5887: UI employer reporting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows ESD to waive certain incomplete wage report penalties <p>SB 6134: Overpayment notifications for striking workers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directs Employment Security to notify claimants involved in a strike of the potential for overpayment when receiving backpay. 	<p>Recording timestamp 03:36:41</p>
<p>Rulemaking-Stephanie Frazee, Legislation and Rules Coordinator ESSB 5525 – Securing Timely Notification and Benefits for Laid-off Employees Act</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 are working on the CR 103 and supporting documents to adopt the new rule. • Documentation for Exceptions – We are drafting 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. • 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 are due on March 13. 	<p>Recording timestamp 03:40:34</p>
<p>Customer Service Metrics-Brian Levy, UIB Deputy Director Call Answer Speed (Calls Answered Within 20 Minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goal: 80% of calls answered within 20 minutes. • Current status: Below goal, but showing improvement. <p>Average Wait to Answer</p>	<p>Recording timestamp 03:43:20</p>

- Goal: 20 minutes or less.
- Current performance: Improved by 6 minutes year over year.
- Overall impact: Roughly a 33% improvement (reduction in average wait time).

High Call Volume Messaging

- Goal: Zero high-volume messages during non-peak season; limited during peak season.
- Current level: 62,000 monthly average in 2025.
- Year-over-year change: About a 25% decrease in high-volume messaging.

Timely First Pay (USDOL Standard)

- Definition: Paying applicants within 21 days of application.
- Goal: 87%+ of applicants paid within the timeframe.
- Year-over-year change: +5% improvement.

Average Days to Approve

- No formal goal established.
- Current performance: Increased from 5.0 days to 5.87 days.
- Reason: Driven by a 20% increase in ongoing weekly claims.

Improper Payments

- Goal: Under 10%.
- Current status: Data available through Q3 (Q4 pending).
- Year over year change: 0.6% decrease in improper payments.

Highlights

JR Richards-additional context

- Our staffing hasn't changed year over year, and that's driven by how we're funded through USDOL.
- We have as many staff as we're able to afford with the funding that we receive. We've focused on how we can improve efficacy within existing staffing levels.
- When we last modeled how many additional staff, we would need to support our total call volume, call answered and plus messages which don't get into the queue, and it's about 130 staff. We've made significant improvements.

Question & Answer

- John Glynn: How Federal claims might have affected the performance, since it's not traditional.
- JR Richards: we did see a pretty big increase in federal claims, and I can follow up with how big of a percentage increase year over year in federal claims specifically.

Public Comments

No public comment

Adjourned

JR Richards thanked everyone for their continued active participation and for their commitment to this work. Meeting adjourned: 3:53 p.m.

2026 Meetings

The next Unemployment Insurance Advisory Committee meeting is on:

- March 20, 2026 – 3:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. – Zoom Meeting