



NASWA Unemployment Insurance Committee

Unemployment Insurance Committee Meeting Notes September 25, 2020 Virtual Meeting

ATTENDANCE

CHAIR: Ronald Marino (NJ)

VICE CHAIR: Beth Townsend (IA)

MEMBERS: Clifford Napier (AK), Patsy Wescott (AK), DeeVee Pearson (AR), Jeff Fitzgerald (CO), Ken Petow (CT), Kurt Westby (CT), Darryl Scott (DE), Wendy Castle (FL), Denise Beckwith (GA), Justin Brissette (IL), Alishea Hawkins (IN), Gina Ashley (IN), Laurel Klein Searles (KS), Richard Jeffers (MA), Vijay Iyer (MD), Laura Boyett (ME), Stephanie Glidden (MI), Kimberly Berry (MI), Anna Hui (MO), Matthew Hankins (MO), Timothy Rush (MS), Brenda Nordlund (MT), Paul Martin (MT), Jeanette Canady (NC), Antwon Keith (NC), Darren Brostrom (ND), Andi Bridgmon (NE), Richard Prince (NE), Michael Burke (NH), Greg Castellani (NJ), Paul Yuen (NJ), Roy Padilla (NM), Jim Polly (OK), Julie Smith (OH), Lindsy Leahy (OR), Jessica Johnson (RI), Kathy Catanzaro (RI), Jamie Suber (SC), Brian Urban (SC), Chuck Ross (TX), Clay Cole (TX), Sandra (TX), Jason Stalinsky (TX), Kevin Burt (UT), Joy Adams (WA), Julie Lord (WA), Amy Banicki (WI)

GUEST: Gay Gilbert (USDOL), Jim Garner (USDOL), Michelle Beebe (USDOL), Pamela Loprest (Urban Institute), Barbara Butrica (Urban Institute), Janet Javar (USDOL), Cornell Krizan (USDOL), William Congdon (Equitable Advisors), Ryan Sutter (USDOL), , Lauren Damme (USDOL), Charlotte Schifferes (USDOL)

NASWA STAFF: Julie Squire, Hillary Hewko, Maria Noble, Scott Sanders, Evan Littrell, Jim Van Erden, Maria Noble, Chris Paquette, Ben Bakas, Jerry Pectol, Cindy Morris, Dianne Spears, Judy Mattinson, Nellie Spangler, Heather Johnson

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Chair Ron Marino (NJ) welcomed members to the virtual NASWA Unemployment Insurance Committee meeting. Chair Marino introduced Beth Townsend (IA) as the incoming chair for the 2020-2021 Association Year.

FEATURED PRESENTATIONS

[U.S. Department of Labor Update](#) – *Presentation is available on the NASWA website.*

Gay Gilbert, Administrator, Unemployment Insurance, USDOL/ETA

- Current priorities for the UI program: CARES Act program implementation, Lost Wage Assistance implementation, UI and PUA fraud, RESEA, UI program accountability.
- Discussion on state priorities and how USDOL can support state priorities.
 - Concern with fraud in the PUA program and the need to request proof of income.

- Need to extend staffing flexibilities for non-merit staff past the December deadline. Members discussed the challenge to quickly onboard staff due to the complexities of the unemployment insurance and new CARES Act programs.
- Difficulty with program management due to changing requirements and deadlines of the CARES Act programs.
- Reemployment challenges because of job seeker fears to return to work due to COVID. As a result, one state has expanded its definition of work search activities to include online courses.
- Concern with the PUA deadline and the impact on claimants still out of work.
- Concern over the timing and state resources needed to provide information for the CARES Act Audit.

NASWA Update

Scott Sanders, Executive Director, NASWA

- Scott discussed member participation in NASWA virtual meetings and led a discussion on the pros and cons of the virtual Summit conference held earlier in the week.
- NASWA will continue to host weekly member calls on Thursdays to discuss current workforce and unemployment insurance policy issues with Administrators and UI Directors.
- Discussion on the NASWA 2021 Legislative Priorities document. Each year NASWA releases a new Legislative Priorities document that contains NASWA's advocacy issues for the year. This document is approved by the Executive Committee of the Board, the Board of Directors and the membership. Committee members will have the opportunity to review and provide input on the Legislative Priorities document prior to the release date in February 2021.

Urban Institute/USDOL Unemployment Insurance COVID-19 Pandemic Response Dashboard

Pam Loprest, Urban Institute

- The USDOL UI COVID-19 Pandemic Response Dashboard provides information on the program and policy changes states have made to their UI programs in response to the current COVID-10 pandemic and economic situation. The dashboard is updated monthly as an excel file. Members were encouraged to share the dashboard with staff agency staff.
- The dashboard can be accessed through this weblink:
https://urban.col.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_eCWE1OTG7qYGfs1

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

Approval of Minutes

Chair Marino asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the NASWA UI Committee meeting held virtually in June. Chuck Ross (TX) moved to approve, and Amy Banicki (WI) seconded the motion. The minutes were approved.

Interstate Benefits Subcommittee Update

Patsy Wescott (AK), Vice-Chair of the Interstate Benefits Subcommittee

- The NASWA UI IB Subcommittee held a virtual meeting in July. The meeting included updates from USDOL and ICON.
- During the July meeting, the Subcommittee voted to confirm NASWA's interpretation that the Interstate Information Exchange Agreement (IIEA) allows for the State Identification Inquiry (SID) Claim and Overpayment (SCO) file information to be shared with states through the Integrity Data Hub.
- The Subcommittee will meet virtually on October 22, 2020 at 1-3pm Eastern.

Input on Challenges and Promising Practices for Processing Claims

Evan Littrell, Project Manager, NASWA

- Members discussed the challenges state agency face to process claims timely while continuing to maintain integrity efforts and compliance with the regulations.
 - Discussion on the recent guidance requiring claims to be backdated without good cause.
- **Fraud Logic Indicators:** One state developed logic indicators to help identify fraudulent claims and prioritize workloads. A claim is marked as potentially fraudulent and set aside if it meets at least two of the logic indicators for suspicious variables. When a claim has a suspicious variable, the claimant receives a notification with instructions to correct the identified items through the online portal. Resolved items are sent to work queues for staff to review.
- **2019 Federal Returns Crossmatch:** In another state, PUA claimants initially receive the minimum weekly benefit amount. The state's Department of Labor setup a crossmatch with the Department of Revenue Services to pull claimants' net adjusted income from the 2019 federal returns, then increase the weekly benefit amounts accordingly. Claimants without a match are notified that their weekly benefit amount will remain at the minimum unless additional information is provided.
 - USDOL notified the state that this process was not in compliance with the regulation and directed the state to pay in accordance with the self-attestation amounts provided by claimants, allowing 21 days for claimants to provide proof of income before adjusting to the minimum weekly benefit amount.
- **Data Dashboard:** One state created a data dashboard to categorize and manage claims. Categories include: Individuals who haven't received payments, Individuals who started to receive payments, Individuals with backdate issues, etc.

UPCOMING EVENTS

December 2020 NASWA UI Committee Virtual Meeting