Maryland Department of Labor
Secretary, Tiffany P. Robinson
Commerce Subcabinet Meeting
Tuesday, February 16

labor.maryland.gov
MDunemployment.com
Since the Beginning of COVID-19

- Received over 1.6 MILLION new claims
- Paid over $9.6 BILLION in state and federal benefits
- Over 20.6 MILLION weekly claim certifications filed and over 17.7 MILLION certifications paid
- Adjudicated over 2.2 MILLION claim issues
- Implemented NINE brand new federal unemployment insurance programs in 2020 and 2021
- Added over 1,000 new unemployment insurance employees (675 call center, 240 adjudicators, and 100 state staff)
- Virtual agent conducted over 2.9 MILLION conversations
- Averted nearly 6,000 layoffs averted through the Work Sharing Program and over 21,000 jobs saved through the Layoff Aversion Fund.
Unprecedented Volume of Claims

- In 2019, we received 171,429 new claims.
- In 2020, we received over 1.4 million new claims filed from March to December - an increase of 814.2%.
- There were several times in 2020 that we received over 100,000 new claims in one week.
- During the Great Recession, we received a peak of 6,000 claims in one week.
- As of the week ending February 6, over 1,640,003 new UI claims have been filed.
Current Unemployment Statistics

Processing as of Week Ending February 6th

- Total Benefits Paid - $9,636,380,769
- Complete Claims Filed - 915,784
- Processed - 873,873 (95.4%) claims
  - Paid - 737,088 (80.5%) claims
  - Denied - 136,785 (14.9%) claims
- Pending - 41,911 (4.6%)
  - Nearly all of the pending claims are disputed and pending further investigation. These claims cannot be processed until they are investigated due to conflicting information provided by the claimant and the claimant’s previous employer.
Unemployment Fraud

- With a record number of unemployment insurance claims filed during the COVID-19 pandemic and the additional federal benefits available, states across the country have seen a spike in fraudsters targeting their UI programs.

- Bad actors and fraudsters have been using illegally obtained data to file fraudulent unemployment insurance claims. **Please note there has been NO breach in our BEACON system.**

- With aggressive and heightened security measures in place, Labor continues to investigate and manually review documentation for potentially fraudulent in-state and out-of-state claims.

- Since the beginning of the pandemic, **over 87% of claims flagged and investigated have been confirmed as fraudulent.** It is critical that the department reviews and verifies documentation manually.

- In fact, of the 243,186 new claims filed in Maryland since January 1, 2021, the department has detected **over 156,000 fraudulent claims.** This is **over 64% of new claims.**
Report Unemployment Fraud

- If you believe that your information has been used to fraudulently file an unemployment insurance claim, please contact the Division of Unemployment Insurance’s Benefit Payment Control Unit by completing a “Request for Investigation of Unemployment Insurance Fraud” form and e-mailing it to ui.fraud@maryland.gov.

- If you believe funds have been fraudulently withdrawn from your Bank of America unemployment insurance debit card, please call Bank of America directly at 1-855-847-2029.

- If you received a 1099-G tax form, but did not apply for or receive unemployment insurance benefits in Maryland in 2020, then please complete this Affidavit form and submit it along with picture ID to the Benefit Payment Control Unit by emailing dlui1099-labor@maryland.gov.

- If you are an employer and believe a fraudulent claim has been charged to your account, please file a benefit charge protest through your employer portal at employer.beacon.labor.md.gov.
Governor Hogan’s RELIEF Act of 2021

• Governor Hogan’s emergency legislative package provides over $1 billion in direct stimulus and tax relief for working families, small businesses, and those who have lost their jobs and are unemployed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

• Benefits for Claimants
  – Provides state income tax relief for individuals who received unemployment benefits
  – Provides further support and assistance for Marylanders who have lost their jobs.

• Benefits for Employers and Small Businesses
  – Extends unemployment tax relief for small businesses, staving off sudden and substantial tax hikes in 2021.
  – This provision codifies an emergency order the Governor issued in December 2020 and extends it by one year.
Additional Legislative Priorities

- **Modernizing Maryland’s Money Transmission Laws**
  - SB 219 & SB 251 update MD’s money transmission laws to reflect and acknowledge modern advancements in the Financial Technology sector, bringing us in line with the federal government and our neighboring states.

- **Eliminating Paper License Requirements**
  - SB 251 modernizes licensing requirements for certain licensees by eliminating the requirement that they hold and maintain paper licenses.

- **Enhancing Correctional Education**
  - SB 86 increases, from 120 to 240, the required number of days for correctional education programs, dramatically enhancing the likelihood of program completion.
Unemployment Contact Information

• **Online Inquiry Form**
  – The online inquiry form, located at labor.maryland.gov/UIhelp, is available for claimants, employers, and third party agents. The form collects all necessary information, routes it to the appropriate unit upon submission, and a tracking number is sent via email.

• **Claimant Call Center**
  – To connect a live agent, claimants should call 667-207-6520.
  – Live claims agents are available from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.
  – They are also available from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. on Saturday and 12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Sunday.

• **Interactive Voice Response (IVR) System for Claimants**
  – To connect with the IVR system available 24/7, call 410-949-0022 or 1-800-827-4839.

• **Employer Call Center**
  – To connect with a live agent, employers should call 410-949-0033.

To find additional resources, tutorial videos, FAQ’s, and more, please visit MDunemployment.com.