



Quarterly Outlook Report

Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund

Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development
Department of Unemployment Assistance
August 2024



MASSACHUSETTS EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF
LABOR & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT



Quarterly Outlook – August 2024

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¹ This report includes data illustrated in charts. For an accessible version of the data in all charts, please see the Appendices.

INTRODUCTION

About the Massachusetts Unemployment Insurance Program

Unemployment Insurance (UI) is an economic stabilization program implemented under federal and state law that provides a safety net for workers who become separated from employment due to no fault of their own. The UI program provides temporary benefits to unemployed workers from the Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance's (DUA) Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund (UI Trust Fund). Employer-paid state unemployment taxes and reimbursements fund the UI Trust Fund and pay for benefits. Pursuant to the Federal Unemployment Tax Act (FUTA), the United States Department of Labor (USDOL) allocates funds to the state to pay for DUA administrative and operational costs.

Additional information, including past reports, can be found at <https://mass.gov/uitrustfund>.

Those seeking further information regarding the UI Trust Fund can email economicresearch@mass.gov.

The projections, forecasts, estimates, and other forward-looking statements contained in the August 2024 UI Trust Fund *Quarterly Outlook Report* are subject to a variety of risks and uncertainties that may cause actual results to differ from the projections set forth. DUA uses information from sources that are believed to be reliable; however, DUA assumes no responsibility for information from sources outside the Commonwealth and its agencies.

Summary

This *Quarterly Outlook Report* provides the status of the UI Trust Fund (UITF) and updated projections for the 2024 through 2028 outlook period.

As required by MGL Chapter 151A, Section 14F, DUA publishes an annual outlook report and quarterly outlooks for the UI Trust Fund based on forecasts for total unemployment rate, annual wage and salary growth rate, and annual labor force. DUA also provides monthly updates on the status of the UI Trust Fund.

Projections of wage and salary growth, total unemployment rate, and the size of the labor force in Massachusetts for each calendar year of the Outlook Period (2024-2028) are represented in *Figure 2* through *Figure 5*. For purposes of the projection estimates contained in this *Quarterly Outlook Report*, the *Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW)* is the primary source for historical actual data on wages and salaries. Local Area Unemployment Statistics (*LAUS*) are the primary source for official unemployment rates and size of the labor force. DUA relied on *Moody's* forecasts dated August 2024 to track forecast trends as they change over time. *Moody's forecasts* were used to project historical *QCEW* and *LAUS data* over the Outlook Period for wage and salary growth, total unemployment rate, and size of labor force.

The outlook presented is for the regular UI program based on 2024 employer experience rates and claims activity through the second quarter of 2024, ending June 30, 2024. Key findings on the year include:

- Contributions for 2024Q2 are estimated to be approximately \$709 million, with a 2024 projected year-end total estimated to be \$1.38 billion. The year-end estimate is down from \$1.54 billion made in the April quarterly report.
- Benefits for 2024Q2 are \$489 million, which is lower than the previous estimate of \$526 million. The year-end total is estimated to be \$2.40 billion, up slightly from \$2.30 billion in April.
- The year began with a UITF balance of \$2.91 billion. The current balance at the end of 2024Q2 is \$2.64 billion. The year-end balance is projected to be \$2.03 billion.

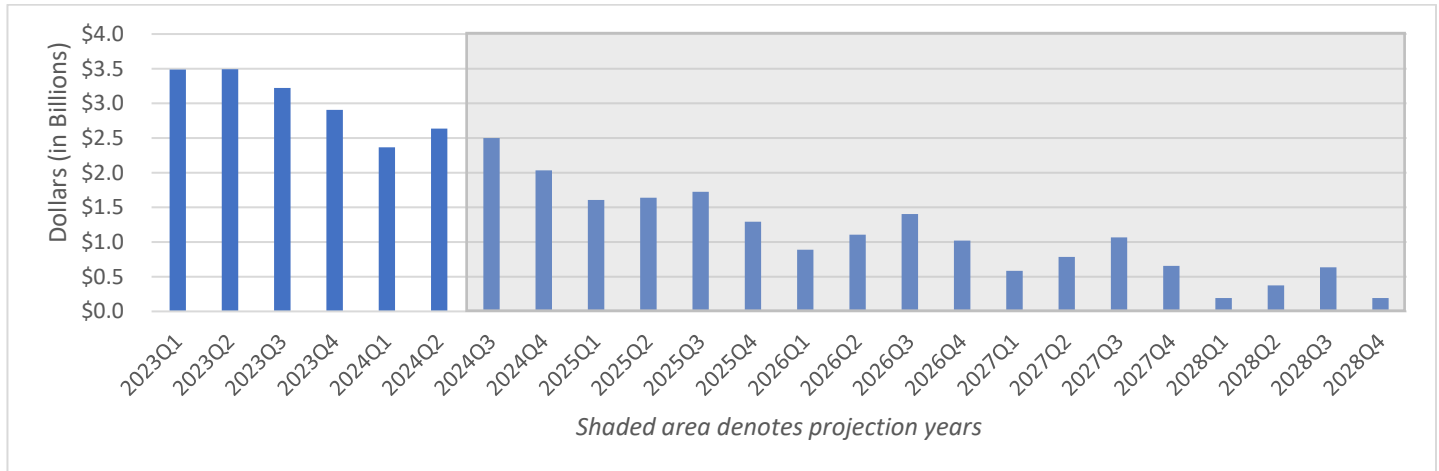
PROJECTION OF BALANCE AND SOLVENCY

For 2024Q2, the Massachusetts UI Trust Fund ending balance is \$2.64 billion (Figure 1). For an accessible version of the data in all charts, please see Appendix 2: Data Projections Tables.

Projections

To project future UI Trust Fund solvency, DUA utilizes forecasts prepared using QCEW actuals for the period ending December 31, 2023. The QCEW total private employment is projected forward by taking growth rates from the Moody’s total nonagricultural employment series. The forecasts on wage and salary growth, unemployment rate, and size of the labor force for calendar years 2024 through 2028 are shown in Figure 3 through Figure 5.

Figure 1: UITF Balance at End of Quarter, 2023-2028



Federal Advances, Bond Issuance and COVID-19 Recovery Assessment

The federal-state unemployment insurance system and the Massachusetts unemployment insurance program played a critical role in delivering economic relief to individuals and families experiencing economic hardship during the COVID-19 pandemic. From June 2020 to April 2021, the Commonwealth borrowed \$2.268 billion of Federal Advances to pay UI benefits. In March 2022, \$500 million of the borrowed amount was repaid using ARPA funds.

In August 2022, \$2.681 billion in special obligation bonds were issued pursuant to the UI Improvement Act (Chapter 9 of the Acts of 2021) and proceeds were used to (i) repay the outstanding Federal Advances as well as the accrued interest on such Federal Advances; (ii) fund a deposit to the UI Trust Fund in the amount of \$867.6 million to pay unemployment compensation benefits to qualifying persons in the Commonwealth; and (iii) pay bond issuance costs.

The UI Improvement Act provided that a COVID-19 Recovery Assessment will be charged to experience-rated, private contributory employers for each year the bonds are outstanding. For 2021 and 2022, the COVID-19 Recovery Assessment was set at \$150 million. For 2023, and until no bonds remain outstanding, the Commonwealth will assess employers a COVID-19 Recovery Assessment that must be at least 125% of the annual debt service on the bonds. The COVID-19 Assessment is in addition to the SUTA tax charged and is an annually-set fixed percentage of each employer’s SUTA rate. The COVID-19 Recovery Assessment will be credited to a special contribution fund held by the bond trustee.

Based on assumptions made at the time of issuing the bonds, the projected COVID-19 annual assessment is as follows:

COVID-19 Annual Assessment (\$ Millions)						
Year	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
Assessment	\$915	\$465	\$349	\$334	\$318	\$301
2025-2028 are estimated and subject to change.						

Economic Basis for Projections

Figure 2 shows the summary of the inflows and outflows to the UITF, relevant performance statistics, and cost burden measures over the projection period. Multiple measures are considered in forming the projections (see *Appendix* for details). Key among those are wage and salary growth, unemployment rate, and the size of the civilian labor force. Charts outlining those estimates follow the figure. For an accessible version of the data in all charts, please see *Appendix 2: Data Projections Tables*.

- Though there is some divergence in the early quarters, the rate of quarter-to-quarter wage and salary growth from 2025 onward is largely unchanged from the previous report though the current estimate of average weekly wage (AWW) is higher than projected in last quarter’s report. This change carries forward through the projections resulting in higher forecasted wages in this quarterly report compared to April. The growth rate is expected to settle just under 1% in 2025 and remain at that approximate level for the rest of the forecast period. See *Figure 3*.
- The April report contained notable changes in unemployment due to annual benchmarking by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). In this report, the changes are limited to typical revisions. Both initial unemployment rates and the quarter-to-quarter change in rates are higher after updates by the *BLS* and *Moody’s*. The unemployment rate is now expected to stabilize at a rate higher than the previous projection from 2025 onward: up to 3.75% from 3.4%. See *Figure 4*.
- The civilian labor force also increased after BLS benchmarking in April. This quarter’s updates grow the labor force still more. The labor force is now expected to increase by 82,000 people between 2024Q1 and 2028Q4, starting from approximately 3.76 million in 2024Q1 (itself revised up) and ending at 3.84 million by 2028Q4. See *Figure 5*.

Figure 2: Model Projections (2024-2028)

Dollars in thousands

Category	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
Balance Jan. 1	\$2,906,675	\$2,034,842	\$1,293,190	\$1,021,131	\$657,232
Contributions	\$1,383,579	\$1,972,886	\$2,610,489	\$2,666,297	\$2,718,925
Trust Fund Interest	\$71,601	\$48,760	\$32,672	\$24,089	\$12,952
Other Inflows and Outflows ²	\$73,995	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Inflows Subtotal	\$1,529,175	\$2,021,646	\$2,643,162	\$2,690,386	\$2,731,877
Outlays	(\$2,401,008)	(\$2,763,298)	(\$2,915,221)	(\$3,054,284)	(\$3,196,914)
Outflows Subtotal	(\$2,401,008)	(\$2,763,298)	(\$2,915,221)	(\$3,054,284)	(\$3,196,914)
Balance Dec. 31	\$2,034,842	\$1,293,190	\$1,021,131	\$657,232	\$192,195

Category	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
Total CY Payroll	\$311,554,352	\$325,015,263	\$337,404,831	\$350,040,727	\$363,230,637
Taxable CY Payroll	\$51,413,703	\$52,280,264	\$53,077,856	\$53,891,305	\$54,740,420
Total CY Contributions as a % of Total CY Payroll	0.44%	0.61%	0.77%	0.76%	0.75%
Total CY Benefits as a % of Total CY Payroll	0.77%	0.85%	0.86%	0.87%	0.88%
Wage Base	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000
Schedule*	C	D	F	F	F
Total Unemployment Rate*	3.52%	3.72%	3.74%	3.75%	3.77%
Average Contribution Rate*	2.14%	3.62%	4.72%	4.75%	4.77%
Solvency Rate*	0.77%	0.88%	0.91%	0.96%	0.97%
T.F. Bal as a % of Total Payroll*	0.65%	0.40%	0.30%	0.19%	0.05%
AHCM*	0.380	0.231	0.176	0.109	0.031

Note: Items marked with asterisk (*) show the value in Q4 rather than an annual sum or average.

² These amounts are those that are exogenous to the projection methodology. For example, in previous years it has included bond proceeds, employer reimbursements, and the like. In recent reports it has primarily served as an adjustment to reconcile estimated values with the known balances at the end of each quarter and largely represented contributions from government and reimbursable employers.

Figure 3: Wage and Salary Growth Rate

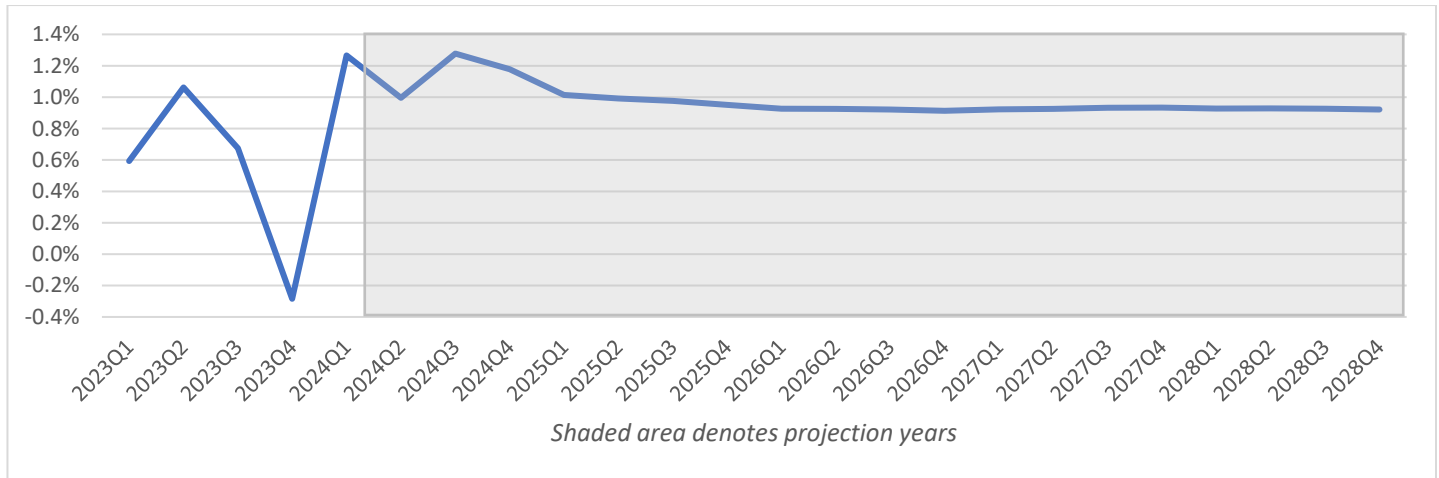


Figure 4: Unemployment Rate

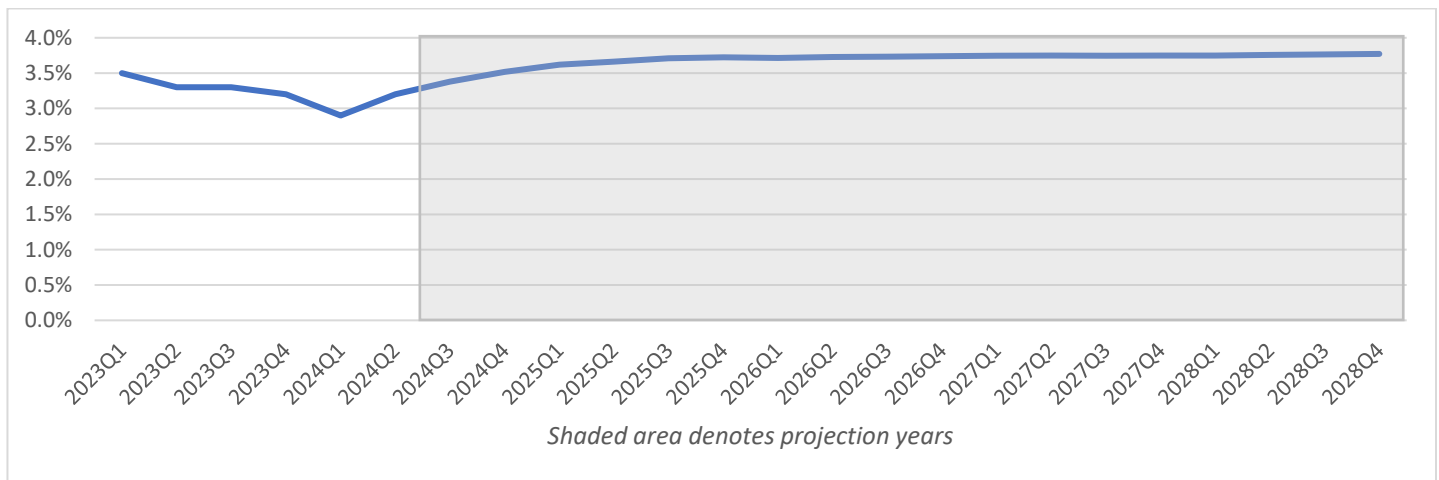
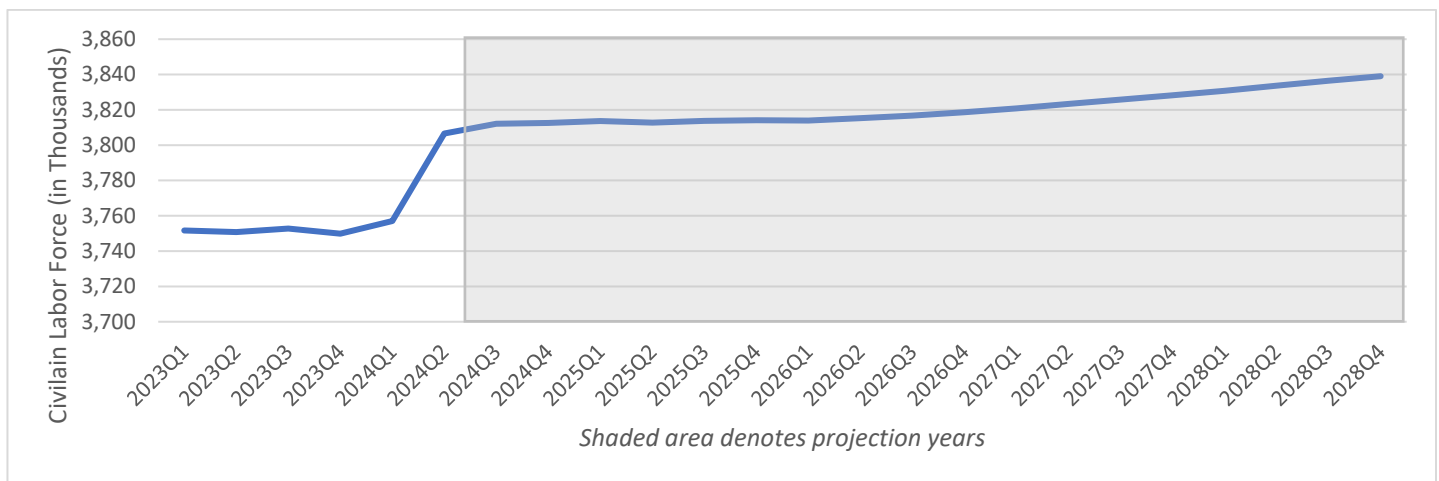


Figure 5: Civilian Labor Force



SUMMARY OF PROJECTED INFLOWS

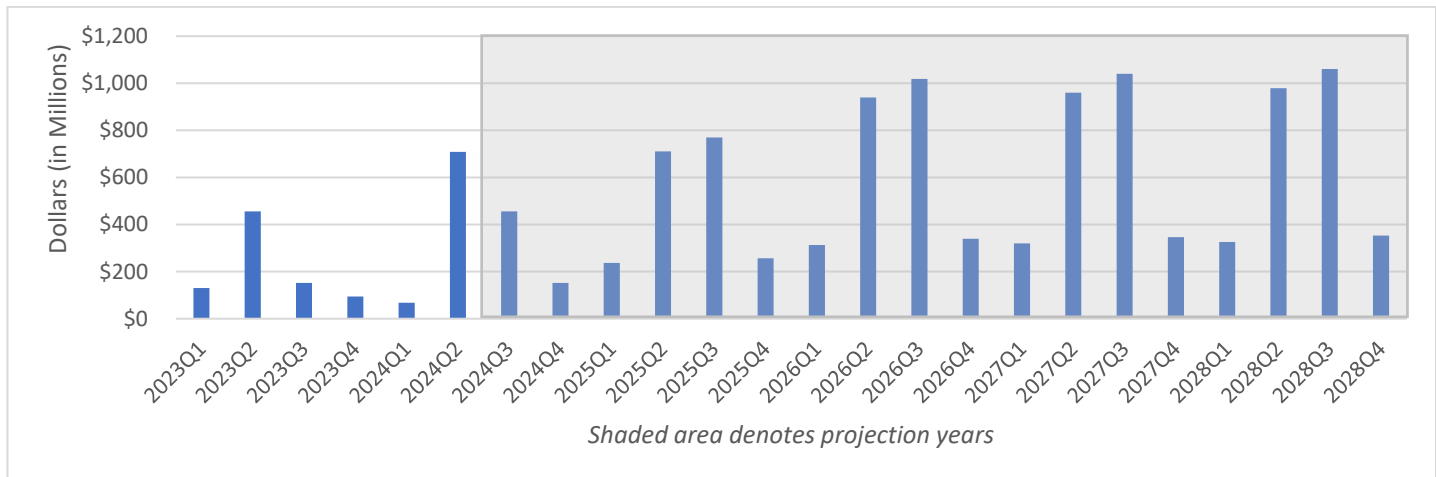
Chapter 151A requires private, for-profit employers to contribute to the UI Trust Fund if their business meets each of the following conditions:

1. They have employees working one or more days in 13 weeks during a calendar year (weeks of employment need not be consecutive, nor must the employees remain the same); and
2. They pay wages of \$1,500 or more in any calendar quarter. Under Chapter 151A, governmental and non-profit employers may elect to contribute to the private contributory UI system instead of participating as reimbursable employers.

Employer contributions are based on taxable wages paid to covered employees on a quarterly basis. Wages subject to contributions are the cumulative total of the first \$15,000 paid to each employee in each of the computational rate years. Employer contributions to the private contributory system are payable quarterly and payments are due within one calendar month of the end of each quarter, on April 30 (1st Quarter), July 31 (2nd Quarter), October 31 (3rd Quarter), and January 31 (4th Quarter).³

Contributions for 2024Q2 are estimated to be approximately \$709 million, with a 2024 projected year-end total estimated to be \$1.38 billion. The year-end projection is lower than was projected in the previous quarterly report. This change results from a change in the distribution of employers across experience ratings, which had the effect of lowering the average contribution rate and thus estimated contributions despite higher estimated taxable payroll. For an accessible version of the data in all charts, please see *Appendix 2: Data Projections Tables*.

Figure 6: Summary of Inflows to UITF at the End of Quarter, 2023-2028



³ Beginning in this report, the methodology for projecting contributions has transitioned from an accrual to a cash basis of accounting. Historically, contributions were projected in the quarter which they were accrued, with approximately 50% of annual employer contributions being accrued in the 1st Quarter. This led to a front-loaded distribution of projected contributions across the year since collection of contributions could occur across quarters regardless of when they were accrued. Contributions are thus now projected based on when they are anticipated to be received, largely in the 2nd and 3rd quarters. This shift, while potentially requiring further refinement, is expected to enhance the accuracy of forecasts moving forward, providing a more precise reflection of contributions within the year.

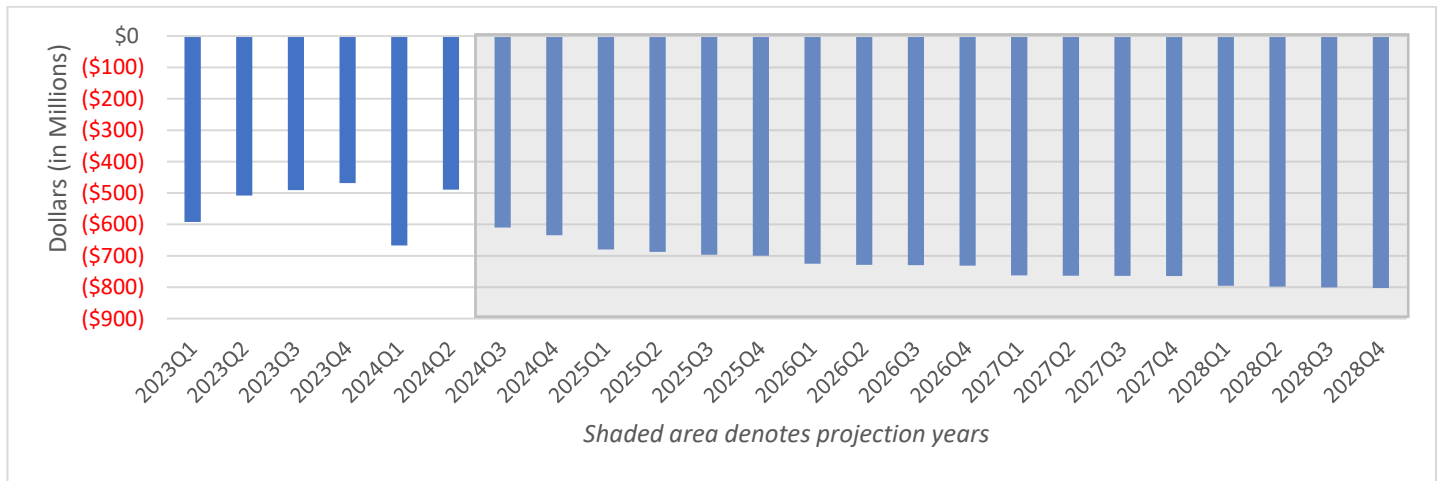
SUMMARY OF PROJECTED OUTFLOWS

UI benefits provide temporary income protection during periods of unemployment and uncertainty for Massachusetts workers who are separated from employment through no fault of their own and are actively seeking new employment. UI benefits are entirely funded through employer contributions.

The trend of year-over-year increases in benefit payments that began in 2022 is expected to continue through the projection period as depicted in *Figure 7*. Though the unemployment rate is expected to stabilize in 2025-2028, a growing labor force and increasing wages will increase the number of unemployed and the average benefit per recipient, driving up aggregate outlays. Furthermore, these underlying values are higher in this quarter than the last, increasing estimated outlays relative to April 2024. For an accessible version of data in *Figure 7* below, please see *Appendix 2*.

Total benefits for 2024Q2 are \$489 million, which are lower than the previous estimate of \$526 million. The year-end total is estimated to be \$2.40 billion, up slightly from \$2.30 billion in April.

Figure 7: Summary of Outflows from UITF at the End of Quarter, 2023-2028⁴



⁴ Projected outflows of benefits are based on an actuarial methodology and subject to revision as more current information used to determine various assumptions becomes available.

APPENDIX 1: DETAILED PROGRAMMATIC BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

Employer contribution rates are based on the experience history of the employer. Experience history refers to the amount of unemployment insurance benefits paid to employees who had a qualifying separation from work in prior years and the number of such employees. DUA maintains an experience rate account for each contributory employer. An employer’s experience rate account is a record of the contributions paid to the UI Trust Fund and the amount of UI benefits paid to an employer’s workers or former workers. DUA relies on employer experience rate accounts to determine the annual contribution rate for each employer in the private contributory UI system.

Once an experience-based contribution rate is assigned, DUA calculates employer contributions by applying the employer’s annual contribution rate to the taxable wages paid to covered employees for that rate year.

Additional information about Employer Contributions can be found at mass.gov/doc/the-employers-guide-to-unemployment-insurance-2/.

Experience Rate Table

Figure 8 reflects DUA’s current employer UI contribution rates by employers’ reserve percentages in accordance with Chapter 151A. The reserve percentage is calculated by the ending balance of the fund as of September 30 in a year divided by the average combined annual wages for all contributing employers for the last three years; this percentage determines which schedule is in effect for the following year.⁵ The calculated reserve percentage as of September 30, 2023, determined *Schedule C* would be in effect for 2024, moving from *Schedule A* in 2023, as established by Chapter 9 of the Acts of 2021. Changes to the schedule would impact estimates within the model, including employer contributions and benefit outlays.

Figure 8: Experience Rate Table

		A	B	C	D	E	F	G
		UITF Reserve Percentage						
<i>Minimum:</i>		1.65%	1.50%	1.20%	0.90%	0.60%	0.30%	
<i>Maximum:</i>			1.65	1.50	1.20	0.90	0.60	0.29%
Employer Account Reserve Percentage	Positive Percentage							
	17.0 or more	0.56	0.64	0.73	0.83	0.94	1.07	1.21
	16.0 but less than 17.0	0.64	0.73	0.83	0.95	1.08	1.22	1.39
	15.0 but less than 16.0	0.73	0.83	0.94	1.07	1.21	1.38	1.57
	14.0 but less than 15.0	0.81	0.92	1.04	1.18	1.34	1.53	1.73
	13.5 but less than 14.0	0.97	1.10	1.25	1.42	1.61	1.83	2.08
	13.0 but less than 13.5	1.05	1.19	1.35	1.54	1.75	1.99	2.26
	12.5 but less than 13.0	1.13	1.28	1.46	1.66	1.89	2.14	2.43
	12.0 but less than 12.5	1.21	1.37	1.56	1.77	2.01	2.29	2.60
	11.5 but less than 12.0	1.29	1.46	1.67	1.89	2.15	2.45	2.78
	11.0 but less than 11.5	1.37	1.56	1.77	2.01	2.29	2.60	2.96
	10.5 but less than 11.0	1.45	1.65	1.87	2.13	2.42	2.75	3.12
	10.0 but less than 10.5	1.53	1.74	1.98	2.25	2.56	2.91	3.30
	9.5 but less than 10.0	1.61	1.83	2.08	2.36	2.69	3.05	3.47
	9.0 but less than 9.5	1.70	1.93	2.19	2.49	2.82	3.21	3.65
	8.5 but less than 9.0	1.78	2.02	2.29	2.61	2.96	3.37	3.82
	8.0 but less than 8.5	1.85	2.10	2.39	2.72	3.09	3.51	3.99
	7.5 but less than 8.0	1.94	2.20	2.50	2.84	3.23	3.67	4.17
	7.0 but less than 7.5	2.02	2.30	2.61	2.96	3.37	3.82	4.35
6.5 but less than 7.0	2.09	2.38	2.71	3.08	3.50	3.97	4.51	
6.0 but less than 6.5	2.17	2.47	2.81	3.20	3.63	4.13	4.69	
5.5 but less than 6.0	2.25	2.56	2.91	3.31	3.76	4.28	4.86	
5.0 but less than 5.5	2.34	2.66	3.02	3.43	3.90	4.43	5.04	
4.5 but less than 5.0	2.42	2.75	3.13	3.55	4.04	4.59	5.21	

⁵ [Experience Rate Schedule](#)

	4.0 but less than 4.5	2.50	2.84	3.23	3.67	4.17	4.74	5.38
	3.5 but less than 4.0	2.58	2.93	3.33	3.79	4.30	4.89	5.56
	3.0 but less than 3.5	2.67	3.03	3.44	3.91	4.44	5.05	5.74
	2.5 but less than 3.0	2.75	3.12	3.54	4.02	4.57	5.20	5.90
	2.0 but less than 2.5	2.82	3.21	3.65	4.14	4.71	5.35	6.08
	1.5 but less than 2.0	2.90	3.30	3.75	4.26	4.84	5.50	6.25
	1.0 but less than 1.5	2.98	3.39	3.85	4.38	4.98	5.65	6.43
	0.5 but less than 1.0	3.06	3.48	3.96	4.50	5.11	5.81	6.60
	0.0 but less than 0.5	3.14	3.57	4.06	4.61	5.24	5.96	6.77
	Negative Percentage							
	0.0 but less than 1.0	4.22	4.79	5.45	6.19	7.03	7.99	9.08
	1.0 but less than 3.0	4.58	5.21	5.92	6.72	7.64	8.68	9.86
	3.0 but less than 5.0	4.95	5.63	6.39	7.27	8.26	9.38	10.66
	5.0 but less than 7.0	5.32	6.04	6.86	7.80	8.86	10.07	11.44
	7.0 but less than 9.0	5.68	6.46	7.34	8.34	9.48	10.77	12.23
	9.0 but less than 11.0	6.05	6.87	7.81	8.88	10.09	11.46	13.02
	11.0 but less than 13.0	6.42	7.29	8.29	9.42	10.70	12.16	13.81
	13.0 but less than 15.0	6.78	7.71	8.76	9.95	11.31	12.85	14.60
	15.0 but less than 17.0	7.15	8.13	9.24	10.49	11.93	13.55	15.39
	17.0 but less than 19.0	7.52	8.54	9.71	11.03	12.53	14.24	16.18
	19.0 but less than 21.0	7.88	8.96	10.18	11.57	13.15	14.94	16.97
	21.0 but less than 23.0	8.25	9.37	10.65	12.11	13.76	15.63	17.79
	23.0 or more	8.62	9.79	11.13	12.65	14.37	16.33	18.55

Economic Projections Methodology

Overview

By statute, the *UI Trust Fund Outlook Report* must include a five-year projection for the UI system’s private contributory system (General Law Chapter 118, Section 53). Specifically, the *Outlook Report* must project the dollar amount of contributions, benefit payments, and the UI Trust Fund balance for each calendar year. When federal loans are outstanding, Chapter 118 further requires the projection of the estimated interest owed to the federal government as of September 30th of the current calendar year, any interest to be collected from employers through a surcharge, and the aggregate dollar amount of any employer FUTA credit reduction that will be applicable in the calendar year. To forecast these figures, DUA relies on outside data sources, estimates, projections, and assumptions. The assumptions, economic forecasts, and source data used in this *Outlook Report* are described below.-

Notice

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the federal government enacted laws and developed programs to provide expanded and enhanced federal unemployment insurance benefits to affected individuals. Such federal programs were administered by the Commonwealth primarily through the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD). In connection with the Commonwealth’s fiscal 2022 audit, EOLWD undertook a reconciliation of federal funding received during fiscal years 2020 through 2023 with respect to these expanded and enhanced unemployment insurance programs developed and required by the federal government. Such reconciliation identified \$2.491 billion drawn by the Commonwealth from federal funding sources in fiscal years 2020 through 2022 in error. The amount that may be due to the federal government, and the timing, method, and source of such reimbursement, are currently unknown. The Commonwealth is engaged in discussions with USDOL to resolve this matter. The beginning balance of the Unemployment Compensation Trust Fund in the fiscal year 2022 ACFR was restated and reduced to account for the results of this reconciliation for fiscal years 2020 and 2021.⁶

⁶ See Exhibit C – [Annual Comprehensive Financial Report](#) for the year ended June 30, 2022; Pages 26-27 and Note 1T to the Basic Financial Statements.

Sources

DUA makes economic projections using data sourced from *Moody's Analytics (Moody's)*, *the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW)*,⁷ *Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS)*,⁸ *the American Community Survey (ACS)*,⁹ and *the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W)*.¹⁰

- DUA projected the dollar amount of contributions and benefits to Massachusetts' UI programs using Moody's most recent economic forecasts. See *Figure 2* through *Figure 5* for a summary of the projections.
- DUA projected unemployment rate, wage and salary growth, and the size of labor force over a 10-year timespan using data from QCEW, LAUS, and Moody's.
- DUA tested and calibrated assumptions using data from ACS and CPI-W, in addition to internal DUA data.
- In making projections, DUA used the following direct data inputs:
 - **Covered employment:** the total number of employees covered by Massachusetts' UI program that are reported to the state by employers.
 - **Total covered payroll:** the total amount of all wages for employment covered by UI, including both taxable payroll and payroll of those employers not subject to UI contributions.
 - **Taxable payroll:** taxable wages paid to employees by employers that are subject to UI contributions.
 - **Chapter 151A effective tax rate on taxable wages:** the rate assessed against eligible employer taxable wages that an employer subject to UI contributions is required to contribute pursuant to Chapter 151A.
 - **Solvency assessment:** the annual factor assessed to an employer's taxable wages to cover the net balance of charges and credits not directly assigned to individual employers, including dependency allowances or approvable voluntary separations. Note that the solvency assessment is not a separate contribution but rather an amount used to determine an employer's Chapter 151A effective tax rate.
 - **Taxable wage proportion:** the ratio of employer's taxable wages (taxable payroll) to total wages (total covered payroll).
 - **Total unemployment rate:** the rate computed by dividing total unemployment by the civilian labor force.
 - **Total insured unemployment rate:** the rate computed by dividing the number of Insured Unemployed for the current quarter by the average covered employment for the first four of the last six completed quarters.

⁷ The [Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages \(QCEW\)](#) program publishes a quarterly count of employment and wages reported by employers covering more than 95 percent of U.S. jobs, available at the county, MSA, state and national levels by industry. Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics.

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⁹ The [American Community Survey](#) is an ongoing survey that provides vital information on a yearly basis about the United States and its people. Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

¹⁰ [The Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers \(CPI-W\)](#) is a monthly measure of the average change over time in the prices paid by urban wage earners and clerical workers for a market basket of consumer goods and services. Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Unemployment Insurance Definitions

Average High-Cost Multiple (AHCM)

The ratio of the year-end trust fund balance as a percent of total wages divided by the Average High-Cost Rate.

Average High-Cost Rate

The average of the three highest calendar benefit cost rates in the last 20 years (or a period including three recessions, if longer).

Benefit Cost Rate

The benefit cost rates are private UI contributory employers' benefits paid (including the state's share of extended benefits when applicable) as a percentage of their total wages.

Benefits Paid

The unemployment insurance benefits paid to individuals funded through the state program. This includes all weeks compensated including partial payments.

Civilian Labor Force

The estimated average number of Massachusetts residents who are either employed or unemployed in the week of the 12th for the three months of the quarter.

Covered Employment

The number of employees covered by Unemployment Insurance reported to the state by employers. The numbers represent the count of all employees for the payroll period that includes the 12th of the month.

COVID-19 Recovery Assessment

The COVID-19 Recovery Assessment is a new COVID-specific employer charge that was established by legislation in 2021.¹¹ It was designed to stabilize employer contribution rates that otherwise would have dramatically increased through normal DUA rate-setting mechanisms as a result of the extraordinarily high benefit payouts during the COVID-19 pandemic. The COVID-19 Recovery Assessment is intended to stabilize employer contribution rates in the near term by recovering the costs of COVID-period benefit outflows over a longer time period.

Federal Advances

Advances acquired by the state under Title XII of the Social Security Act which allows states to use repayable advances from the federal UI account.

Initial Claims

Any notice of unemployment filed by an individual (1) to request a new determination of entitlement to and eligibility for unemployment compensation or (2) to begin a second or subsequent period of eligibility within a benefit year or period of eligibility following an additional separation from employment.

Insured Unemployment

Insured unemployment, also referred to as continued claims, is the number of people who have already filed an initial claim and who have experienced a week of unemployment and then filed a continued claim to claim benefits for that week of unemployment.

Insured Unemployment Rate (IUR)

The rate computed by dividing Insured Unemployed for the current quarter by the average Covered Employment for the first four of the last six completed quarters.

Solvency Assessment

The annual factor assessed to employer taxable payrolls to cover the net balance of charges and credits not directly assigned to individual employers.

Taxable Wages or Taxable Payroll

Wages paid to covered employees that are subject to State Unemployment Insurance taxes. For Massachusetts, the first \$15,000 in wages per employee is covered by UI.

¹¹ [Chapter 16](https://malegislature.gov/Laws/SessionLaws/Acts/2021/Chapter16). (<https://malegislature.gov/Laws/SessionLaws/Acts/2021/Chapter16>)

Taxable Wage Base

For each State, the maximum amount of wages paid to an employee by an employer during a year in which their employment is subject to UI taxes. Wages above this amount are not subject to UI tax.

Total Unemployed

The estimated average number of residents, 16 years of age or older, who do not have a job but are available for work and actively seeking work in the week of the 12th for the three months of the quarter. This includes individuals on layoff and waiting to report to a new job within 30 days.

Total Unemployment Rate (TUR)

The rate computed by dividing Total Unemployed by the Civilian Labor Force.

Total Wages

All wages or remuneration paid to workers on all payrolls covered by Unemployment Insurance.

Trust Fund Balance (TF)

The balance in the individual state account in the Unemployment Trust Fund. Outlook estimates are for the private contributory account within the Trust Fund.

Trust Fund Balance as % of Total Wages

Year-end Trust Fund Balance as a percent of estimated wages for the most recent 12 months. Estimated wages are based on the latest growth rate in the 12-month moving average (MA).

Unemployment Trust Fund

A fund established in the Treasury of United States which contains all monies deposited by state agencies to the credit of their unemployment fund accounts.

Weeks Claimed

The number of weeks claimed for UI benefits, including weeks for which a waiting period or fixed disqualification period is being served. Interstate claims are counted in the state of residence.

Weeks Compensated

The number of weeks claimed for which UI benefits are paid. Weeks compensated for partial unemployment are included. Interstate claims are counted in the paying state.

APPENDIX 2: DATA PROJECTIONS TABLES

Figure 1: UITF Balance at End of Quarter, 2023-2028

Date	Balance at the End of Quarter (\$M)
2023Q1	\$3,489
2023Q2	\$3,492
2023Q3	\$3,222
2023Q4	\$2,907
2024Q1	\$2,367
2024Q2	\$2,636
2024Q3	\$2,500
2024Q4	\$2,035
2025Q1	\$1,606
2025Q2	\$1,640
2025Q3	\$1,724
2025Q4	\$1,293
2026Q1	\$890
2026Q2	\$1,107
2026Q3	\$1,403
2026Q4	\$1,021
2027Q1	\$586
2027Q2	\$786
2027Q3	\$1,068
2027Q4	-\$657
2028Q1	\$192
2028Q2	\$374
2028Q3	\$637
2028Q4	\$192

Figure 3: Wage and Salary Growth Rate

Date	Wage and Salary Growth Rate (%)
2023Q1	0.59%
2023Q2	1.06%
2023Q3	0.68%
2023Q4	-0.28%
2024Q1	1.27%
2024Q2	1.00%
2024Q3	1.28%
2024Q4	1.18%
2025Q1	1.01%
2025Q2	0.99%
2025Q3	0.98%
2025Q4	0.95%
2026Q1	0.93%
2026Q2	0.93%
2026Q3	0.92%
2026Q4	0.91%
2027Q1	0.92%
2027Q2	0.93%
2027Q3	0.93%
2027Q4	0.93%
2028Q1	0.93%
2028Q2	0.93%
2028Q3	0.93%
2028Q4	0.92%

Figure 4: Unemployment Rate

Date	Unemployment Rate (%)
2023Q1	3.50%
2023Q2	3.30%
2023Q3	3.30%
2023Q4	3.20%
2024Q1	2.90%
2024Q2	3.20%
2024Q3	3.38%
2024Q4	3.52%
2025Q1	3.62%
2025Q2	3.66%
2025Q3	3.71%
2025Q4	3.72%
2026Q1	3.71%
2026Q2	3.73%
2026Q3	3.73%
2026Q4	3.74%
2027Q1	3.75%
2027Q2	3.75%
2027Q3	3.75%
2027Q4	3.75%
2028Q1	3.75%
2028Q2	3.76%
2028Q3	3.76%
2028Q4	3.77%

Figure 5: Civilian Labor Force

Date	Civilian Labor Force (Thousands)
2023Q1	3,752
2023Q2	3,751
2023Q3	3,753
2023Q4	3,750
2024Q1	3,757
2024Q2	3,807
2024Q3	3,812
2024Q4	3,813
2025Q1	3,814
2025Q2	3,813
2025Q3	3,814
2025Q4	3,814
2026Q1	3,814
2026Q2	3,815
2026Q3	3,817
2026Q4	3,819
2027Q1	3,821
2027Q2	3,823
2027Q3	3,826
2027Q4	3,828
2028Q1	3,831
2028Q2	3,834
2028Q3	3,836
2028Q4	3,839

Figure 6: Summary of Inflows to UITF at the End of Quarter, 2023-2028

Date	Employer Contributions (\$M)
2023Q1	\$130.3
2023Q2	\$455.9
2023Q3	\$152.1
2023Q4	\$94.4
2024Q1	\$67.4
2024Q2	\$708.7
2024Q3	\$455.6
2024Q4	\$151.9
2025Q1	\$236.7
2025Q2	\$710.2
2025Q3	\$769.4
2025Q4	\$256.5
2026Q1	\$313.3
2026Q2	\$939.8
2026Q3	\$1,018.1
2026Q4	\$339.4
2027Q1	\$320.0
2027Q2	\$959.9
2027Q3	\$1,039.9
2027Q4	\$346.6
2028Q1	\$326.3
2028Q2	\$978.8
2028Q3	\$1,060.4
2028Q4	\$353.5

Figure 7: Summary of Outflows from UITF at the End of Quarter, 2023-2028¹²

Date	Benefits Payments (\$M)
2023Q1	-\$592.4
2023Q2	-\$507.9
2023Q3	-\$491.0
2023Q4	-\$468.5
2024Q1	-\$667.1
2024Q2	-\$489.2
2024Q3	-\$610.0
2024Q4	-\$634.7
2025Q1	-\$679.7
2025Q2	-\$687.6
2025Q3	-\$696.5
2025Q4	-\$699.5
2026Q1	-\$725.5
2026Q2	-\$728.6
2026Q3	-\$729.9
2026Q4	-\$731.3
2027Q1	-\$762.5
2027Q2	-\$763.5
2027Q3	-\$763.8
2027Q4	-\$764.5
2028Q1	-\$795.7
2028Q2	-\$798.2
2028Q3	-\$800.5
2028Q4	-\$802.5

¹² Projected outflows of benefits are based on an actuarial methodology and subject to revision as more current information used to determine various assumptions becomes available.