



## THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF LABOR AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

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### **Introduction**

In accordance with Chapter 151 of the Acts of 2020, the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD) has embarked on a comprehensive modernization and transformation for “the deployment of an online delivery system for unemployment insurance compensation benefits” initiative. In addition to the legislative mandate to focus on unemployment, EOLWD is also focusing on post-pandemic and long-term re-employment goals in order to provide the workforce and businesses of Massachusetts with a seamless and efficient job-loss-to-job gain experience. EOLWD is thankful to the Legislature for providing the funding to enable the Secretary’s mission to achieve the following goals:

- **Provide outstanding service to the workforce and businesses of MA.** Provide an improved customer experience online, by phone, and in person. Deliver timely and accurate benefits.
- **Be a national leader.** Be among top performing states on federal performance measures focusing on timely and high-quality services and ensuring accessibility and equity in providing services to the workforce.
- **Operate Efficiently.** Eliminate ineffective or unnecessary business processes to better provide streamlined service to customers.
- **Provide accurate, timely and responsive reporting.** Ensure that data is accurate and is provided timely and can flexibly respond to stakeholder needs and inquiries.

### **Program Strategy and Status:**

As directed by the enabling legislation, the current primary focus of the program is to address the unemployment benefits delivery system and operations. Additionally, in order to fully serve the workforce and businesses of the Commonwealth, EOLWD has established a four phase plan to not only ensure that the eligible unemployed workforce receives the financial benefits of unemployment insurance but that the Commonwealth also can assist the workforce in gaining new, more personally desirable and higher-paying jobs, can efficiently service workers and businesses online and via more traditional channels and can ensure that both the Department of Unemployment Assistance (DUA) and the MassHire Department of Career Services (MDCS) run cost-efficiently. To those ends, the Secretary has established a four phased program that encompasses the employment/re-employment modernization and transformation effort. In time sequence order, these phases call for the modernization and transformation of:

- 1) The DUA operations and underlying technology systems for claims processing, certification, disqualification, appeals, revenue, tax management and reporting, benefits administration, collections, etc.

- 2) The Re-employment (MDCS) operations and underlying technology systems for career counseling, job search, training, re-employment grants and programs, virtual career pathways, employer support, etc.
- 3) The contact center operations and technology for both DUA and MDCS
- 4) The overall financial operations of DUA and MDCS

As such, EOLWD will release a series of modular procurements focused on the functionality indicated above. A high-level timeline for these procurements is outlined below, with the stipulation that ensuring quality, manageable risk and stakeholder input is what will define the actual schedules.

1. A Request for Response (RFR) <sup>1</sup> is expected to be released for public comment in the late July/early August timeframe, before formally issuing in late August/early September with an anticipated program start date of January 2022. This RFR will be for the comprehensive software and services necessary to modernize and transform the entire unemployment insurance experience. The Advisory Council created by the General Governmental Bond Bill, with its focus on universal accessibility, has been regularly engaging with EOLWD. EOLWD is very appreciative of the input provided to date which has contributed to ensuring that the next generation unemployment benefits system strives to accommodate the entire workforce and business community to the maximum extent reasonably feasible.
2. The RFR for modernization and transformation of the re-employment operations and systems (MDCS) will be developed, in parallel with the unemployment program, with a goal of releasing an RFR by early to mid-2022.
3. Modernization and transformation of the EOLWD contact center technology and operations. Program start date is currently **TBD**.
4. Modernization and transformation of the EOLWD overall financial management systems. Program start date is currently **TBD**.

#### **Progress on Accessibility and Engagement with the Advisory Council**

Since January 2021, EOLWD has regularly engaged with the Advisory Council regarding accessibility for the unemployment benefits system. To date, the Advisory Council has provided EOLWD with input regarding their concerns with the current systems and how EOLWD has addressed accessibility in the past.

EOLWD has ensured that all input from the Council has been addressed and provided feedback to the Council. As EOLWD is progressing towards public release of the unemployment benefits RFR as described above, EOLWD looks forward to the Council's input regarding selection criteria for the Secretary's consideration prior to the formal release of the RFR.

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<sup>1</sup> A Request for Response (RFR) is the Commonwealth's equivalent of what is more commonly called a Request for Proposals (RFP)