



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Virginia Employment Commission

Carrie Roth
Commissioner
Advisor to the Governor for
Strategic Initiatives

Post Office Box 26441
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April 12, 2023

The Honorable Glenn Youngkin
Governor, Commonwealth of Virginia
Patrick Henry Building
1111 E. Broad Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

The Honorable Kathy Byron
Chairwoman, House Commerce and Energy
Pocahontas Building
900 E. Main Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

The Honorable Richard Saslaw
Chairman, Senate Commerce and Labor
Senate of Virginia
P.O. Box 396
Richmond, Virginia 23218

The Honorable Adam Ebbin
Chairman, Commission on Unemployment
Compensation
Senate of Virginia
P.O. Box 396
Richmond, Virginia 23218

Dear Governor, Chairmen and Madame Chair:

Per the 2023-2024 Budget of the Commonwealth of Virginia, the Virginia Employment Commission is required to provide a quarterly report on the plan to resolve outstanding adjudications with issues established in 2020 and 2021 and update on the Unemployment Compensation Ombudsman to the Governor, House Commerce and Energy Committee, the Senate Commerce and Labor Committee, and the Commission on Unemployment Compensation. This letter serves to meet that requirement.

Resolving Outstanding Adjudications + All Issues on Claims from 2020/2021

The VEC is tasked with developing a plan regarding the specific actions and timeline to resolve outstanding adjudications and issues established on claims from 2020 and 2021. The VEC has set its priorities and developed its strategic direction to transform the agency to be the "Best in Class" example of an employment security agency in the country.

As of today, in potential fraud, there is one claim with issues established in 2020 and four claims with issues established in 2021, that will be resolved at the end of the month. In adjudication, there are no outstanding claims with issues established in 2020 or 2021.

The Unemployment Insurance Benefits team is focused now on meeting and then exceeding the U.S. Department of Labor benefits timeliness and quality standards.

We have adjusted the work streams of the current adjudication staff as they have worked through the backlog to support other work streams such as appeals and potential fraud. There is not a need to hire additional staff to resolve claims.

Ombudsman (Chief Customer Advocate) Project

The Chief Customer Advocate position was created in 2022 to support individuals and groups who are underserved or disadvantaged and address the availability of and access to UI programs and services. We were saddened to receive the resignation of Tamara Jones who has served as the Chief Customer Advocate. The recruitment for her replacement is underway.

The Customer Advisory Council (CAC) is formed and held their first meeting in March. The CAC consists of representatives from local and state organizations that advocate on behalf of underserved populations. The CAC provides guidance and feedback to the Chief Customer Advocate and team on the effectiveness of the VEC's outreach efforts and areas where those efforts could be improved.

To date, we have hired a team of 11 Customer Advocates who work in Virginia Career Works Centers throughout the Commonwealth: Wytheville; Roanoke; Richlands; Prince William County; Norfolk; Fishersville; Lynchburg; Martinsville; South Boston; Henrico/Cedar Fork communities; and Petersburg/Emporia/Prince George communities. These individuals are currently undergoing training. In addition to their work with customers, our local Customer Advocates will be the referral point for members of the General Assembly within the region they serve. There are three remaining positions to fill.

The Chief Customer Advocate also provides educational information and assistance to all persons seeking assistance in appeals and other matters related to unemployment compensation. As the Customer Advocate positions are filled and trained, the implementation of these services will continue to expand. In addition, the Chief Customer Advocate is a key leader on our Plain Language Project team to ensure all efforts keep the customer as the focus and foundation of communications from the Virginia Employment Commission.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at carrie.roth@vec.virginia.gov or 804.786.3001 with any questions.

Sincerely,



Carrie Roth