



For Immediate Release

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IWD Receives \$2.9M Federal Grant to Enhance Key Unemployment Services

Grant will help enhance phone software, appeals process, employee training and more

DES MOINES, IOWA – Iowa Workforce Development has been awarded \$2.9 million from the U.S. Department of Labor to make targeted improvements to several high-use services connected to unemployment insurance. The money will fund enhancements that will ultimately eliminate additional barriers, reduce backlogs, and improve the overall timeliness of unemployment payments.

“Iowa Workforce Development is grateful to receive this award, which will help our agency make targeted improvements in multiple areas,” said Beth Townsend, Director of Iowa Workforce Development. “We are continually looking for ways we can provide better service to Iowans. This award will help us make unique enhancements to improve the way we deliver unemployment benefits and will increase the viability of core agency services over the long term.”

The Department of Labor announced plans last August to award up to \$260 million nationwide for activities promoting equitable access to unemployment benefits. Iowa’s \$2.9 million award will support IWD in the following areas:

1. Enhanced Phone Software

- Providing more options and features for IWD’s phone system, including call transcription and analysis to help IWD improve its customer service.

2. Appeals Backlog Support

- Supporting expenses from a COVID-related backlog of processing claims.

3. Misclassification of Workers

- Funding will assist with increased efforts to identify workers who are being misclassified under the law. (IWD identified this need during the height of the pandemic based on the number of people who filed for special Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) but who were not previously working as covered employees.)

4. Outreach

- Updating materials for the public, translating materials, and adding material to websites, as well as the creation of videos to support claimant services.

5. Enhanced Employee Training

- Increasing employee training options to increase awareness of diverse populations and audiences.

For more information about the grant, click [here](#).

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