

Cabinet and Governor Appointed Agencies' Performance Audit Action Item(s) & Status

Evaluating Customer Service at Washington's Department of Employment Security

(See also [cabinet agency response](#) for full context to Washington State Auditor's Office (SAO) [report](#), December 2022)

The Employment Security Department (ESD) was the only agency audited for this performance audit.

SAO Results Summary in brief:

1. As of July 2022, ESD had partially implemented legislative requirements aimed at helping speed payments and increase transparency.
2. Customer service improved as staff workload declined.
3. ESD's efforts aimed at improving customer service have shown minimal results.
4. ESD does not have a robust performance management structure in place to monitor and improve its customer service.
5. Certain practices helped other states handle increased customer service demands during the pandemic.

SAO Recommendations (Rec) Summary:

1. Ensure processes put in place to monitor pool numbers and member information are operating as designed and sufficient to ensure readily available and accurate member information.
2. Establish processes to monitor training program outcomes, such as formal evaluations of activated staff.
3. Continue working to establish a dedicated telephone line for those with limited computer skills or access.
4. Ensure it explores all required areas with the unemployment insurance advisory committee.
5. Include all required metrics clearly in reports.
6. Update the online data dashboard to include all metrics from ESSB 5193.
7. Ensure it is clearly and accurately updating the Legislature on progress made in delivering ESSB 5193 requirements through their regular reporting.
8. Track and regularly monitor performance over time of the employer and disability telephone lines and the virtual assistant.
9. Capture customer satisfaction more effectively across all avenues of contact and use that information to improve performance.
10. Correct federal timeliness reporting to reflect the true date a person applied for unemployment, regardless of program transfers, to ensure accurate federal reporting.
 - a. Report publicly on payment timeliness at regular intervals using the new query method ESD created for this audit. Include this information on ESD's public-facing online data dashboard.
11. Develop a process to better track and monitor customer service. (recommend including a strategic plan, following Office of Financial Management guidance and tracking projects until completed.
12. Implement systematic tracking of call volume and call center staffing levels over time. This system requires:
 - a. Regular reports to management and leadership with enough detail to effectively inform staffing decisions
 - b. Confirmation ESD is meeting the call center staffing targets dictated by its staffing algorithm
13. For each project, ensure:
 - a. It aligns with agency strategic planning at the start of the project
 - b. Continued assessment of project performance is built into the final transition to operations part of the project so agency leaders can assess the value to business processes, including measures to show success toward furthering agency goals at its completion

c. Project plans contain enough detail to show what has been completed as well as the timelines and priorities for future project work

The table below shows the current status of action items the agency initiated to address issues identified in the performance audit report. Please see the [cabinet agency response](#) for additional context and any additional steps already taken.

For an explanation of the columns below, [see the legend](#).

Issue/ Rec	Status	Action Steps	Lead Agency	Due Date	Current Resources ?	Budget Impact?	Legislation Required?	Notes
Rec 1-7	Completed	Consult with UIAC on the required frequency of training for adjudication reserve pool members	ESD	11/22	Yes	No	No	ESD consulted with UIAC on the required frequency of training for adjudication reserve pool members at the November 9, 2022 UIAC meeting linked here: Unemployment Insurance Advisory Committee - TVW
Rec 1-7	Completed	Report employer and claimant call metrics separately in the data dashboardP	ESD	3/23	Yes	No	No	ESD began reporting employer and claimant call metrics separately in the data dashboard in March 2023. Including a link to the data dashboard here: ESDWAGOV - Benefits data dashboard
Rec 1-7	Completed	Incorporate existing UI Claims Center dedicated call line serving people with limited technology access and proficiency into new phone system	ESD	4/23	Yes	No	No	The dedicated call line serving people with limited technology access and proficiency was established third quarter 2022 and incorporated into the new UI benefits phone system when it launched in April 2023.
Rec 1-7	Completed	All metrics to address ESSB 5193 published in the online data dashboard	ESD	4/23	Yes	No	No	ESD separated out employer and claimant call metrics in the data dashboard in March of 2023. Additionally, we added more definitions to provide clarity on the data reported in the dashboard in April 2023. ESD is reporting all metrics to address ESSB 5193 on the online dashboard linked here: ESDWAGOV - Benefits data dashboard
Rec 8-10	Completed	Transition employer and disability customer phone lines to the new phone system	ESD	4/23	Yes	No	No	The disability customer phone lines were transitioned to the new UI benefits phone system when it launched in April 2023. Employer calls are managed through a

Issue/ Rec	Status	Action Steps	Lead Agency	Due Date	Current Resources ?	Budget Impact?	Legislation Required?	Notes
								different phone system and was out of scope for the UI Benefit phone system replacement project. Employer call center measures are tracked and reported consistent with claimant call center measures.
Rec 8-10	Completed	Implement phase one of the integrated customer feedback survey	ESD	3/23	Yes	No	No	Phase one of the integrated customer feedback survey was implemented in May 2023. The survey is presented to new claim filers in eServices and is available in both Spanish and English. The survey results are being used to drive process and technology system changes to improve customer experience. ESD is continuing to develop integrated customer feedback surveys offered to claimants at key moments in their UI claim journey.
Rec 11-13	Completed	Include federally mandated operational measures in division level operational plans, tied to the agency strategic plan	ESD	1/23	Yes	No	No	Federally mandated operational measures are used to drive and measure division level operation plans and are tied to the strategic plan.
Rec 11-13	Completed	Incorporate operational measure review into the portfolio steering work, Top Priority Project Review and the Quarterly Target Review	ESD	3/23	Yes	No	No	Federally mandated operational measures are used to drive and measure division level operation plans and are tied to the strategic plan.