



**MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
Customer Service Annual Report
FY20**





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FY20 Highlights

- The staff at the Department of Labor has been working tirelessly to provide excellent customer service during FY20 and demonstrated the ability to pivot amidst the evolving COVID-19 pandemic and ensure streamlined, uninterrupted assistance to constituents via the phone and internet.
- The name of the agency changed from the Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation to the Maryland Department of Labor.
- The agency successfully implemented a telework model to safeguard employees while ensuring work continuity during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The Maryland Department of Labor received more customer service surveys than any other agency.
- The Maryland Department of Labor has continued to issue the state's jobs statistics and unemployment rate on a monthly basis in conjunction with the Bureau of Labor and Statistics (BLS).

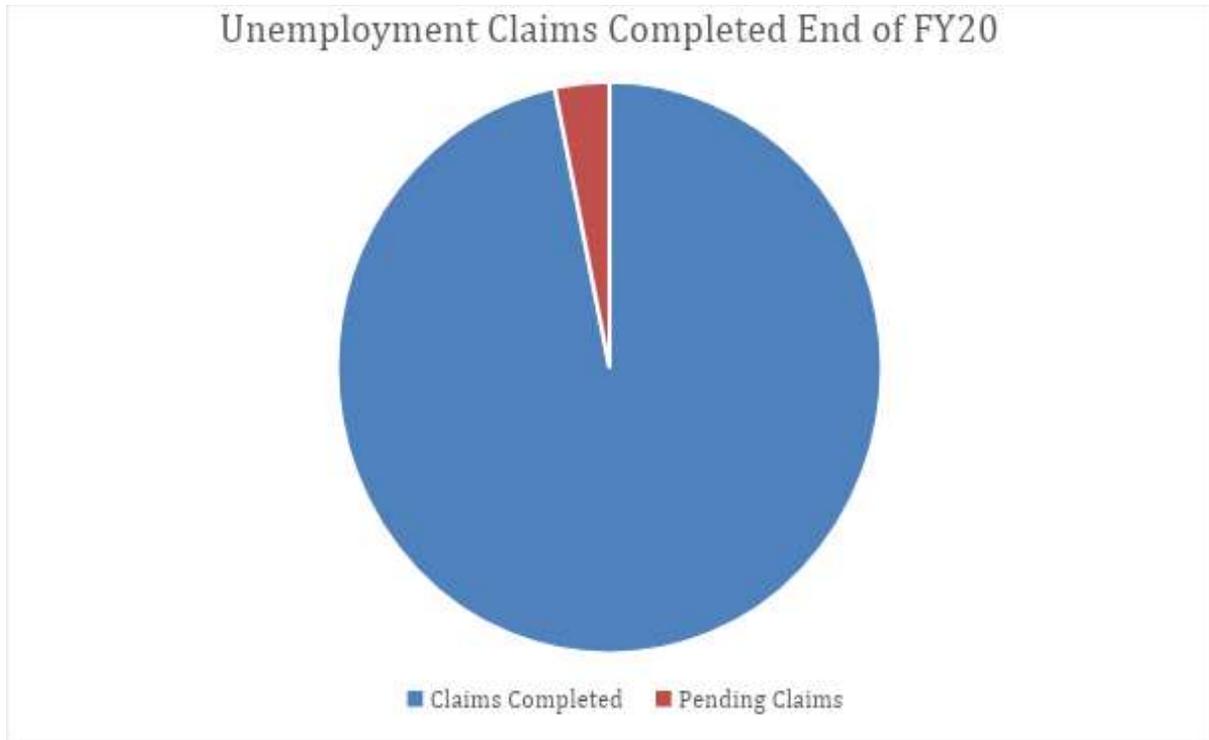
Recognition Given to Employees

- As a part of the department's customer service initiative, the most vital piece is the recognition program that highlights employees for providing excellent customer service to constituents while simultaneously motivating other staff members and boosting morale within the agency.
- Maryland Department of Labor employees were recognized in the weekly Labor staff electronic newsletter for achieving a milestone for years of service with the agency as well as outstanding achievements.

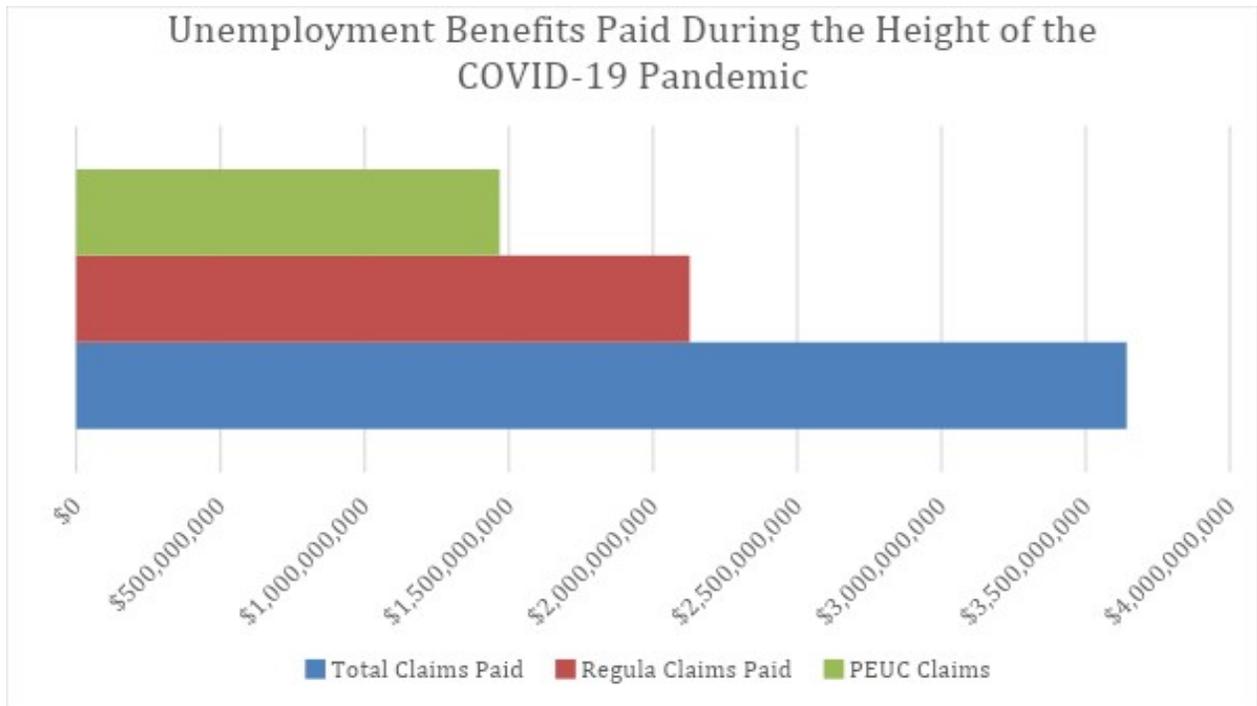
FY20 Leadership Analysis

- The Maryland Department of Labor is committed to safeguarding and protecting Marylanders. The department is proud to support the economic stability of the state by providing businesses, the workforce and the consuming public with high quality customer-focused regulatory, employment and training services. To do this effectively, the agency is laser focused on providing exemplary customer service to all constituents.
- The customer service promise is prominently displayed on the website as well as in all of the Maryland Department of Labor's offices and buildings to instill the idea that customer service is the agency's highest priority.
- The agency has moved toward more innovative, user friendly digital solutions to provide additional self-service options for constituents via the website, social media and phone applications.
- The Maryland Department of Labor's Division of Unemployment Insurance launched the new online BEACON One-Stop application in April 2020 to offer all Marylanders the opportunity to quickly and easily file all types of unemployment claims and weekly certifications entirely online 24/7. This includes both regular claims and claims funded by the federal government under the CARES Act unemployment insurance program.
- The agency continues to reinforce and acknowledge positive individual performance among employees.
- The Maryland Department of Labor will continue the approach of "leading by example" that was exercised in FY20. The leadership team has been accessible to staff and actively responding to constituent inquiries to reinforce the teamwork approach to staff.
- The e-newsletter was rebranded during the summer of 2019 to coincide with the agency name change. A contest was held to allow employees the opportunity to submit suggestions for the name. The new name is "Labor – We're All In!" The e-newsletter serves as a vehicle to communicate with all employees. It allows the secretary to send updates while highlighting staff achievements and milestones. It also provides consistent messaging to staff to enhance customer service.

Detailed FY20 Results



Of the 624,978 complete claims received from March 9 to June 27, 601,208 (96.2%) have been processed with 492,789 (78.8%) receiving benefit payments and 108,419 (17.3%) being denied benefits for not meeting state and federal program requirements. Of the claims that have already been denied, the large majority were denied because claimants had issues related to the separation from their most recent employer or were determined to be monetarily ineligible.



The Maryland Department of Labor Paid Over \$3.6 Billion in Benefits. From March 9 to June 27, the Maryland Department of Labor’s Division of Unemployment Insurance paid a total of \$3,642,243,364 in regular and CARES Act unemployment insurance benefits to claimants. This total amount includes \$2,126,846,214 in regular benefits, \$1,468,112,926 in PUA benefits, and \$47,284,224 in Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC) benefits.

Customer Service Survey Results

FY20 saw a huge influx of the Governor’s Customer’s Service Surveys for the Maryland Department of Labor. Due to the number of jobs lost as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department experienced a number of constituents who commented on the unemployment process.

Status of Customer Service Training

The Maryland Department of Labor completed customer service training for all staff in FY19 and took on the task of producing mandatory Sexual Harassment Prevention Training. In October 2018, the Maryland legislature passed H.B. 1423 and subsequent H.B. 679, which were signed into law by Governor Hogan. These new laws required **all** staff (including regular, contractual and independent contractors) to have in-class, interactive Sexual Harassment Prevention training. The Sexual Harassment Prevention Training began for staff in FY20 as in-class instruction which ended due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The agency is developing a plan to ensure that the training continues.

Improving the Customer Experience from Multiple Perspectives

During FY20, the COVID-19 pandemic emerged, causing the agency staff to transition from working in the office to working remotely out of an abundance of caution. Each division with the Maryland Department of Labor created unique, innovative plans to ensure the continuation of workflow with uninterrupted processes. Contact with constituents, other staff, licensees, and businesses occurred primarily through phone email. In addition, the agency's website was enhanced with features to provide more user-friendly services.

Making Agency Services Available Online

The Maryland Department of Labor (Labor) launched the BEACON One-Stop online system on Friday, April 24, 2020. BEACON One-Stop allows claimants to file claims for ALL unemployment insurance (UI) benefit programs including those created as a result of the implementation of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act). This single application allows constituents to apply for the most recent federally-enacted unemployment programs, Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) and Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC). BEACON One-Stop is an application that also allows claimants to file claim certifications, upload supporting documentation and review their benefit payment history among other features.

In an effort to provide the best user experience, the Division of Unemployment Insurance will be taking the application down nightly between the hours of 1:00 a.m. to 3:00 a.m. to perform maintenance and resolve any ongoing technical issues. While the website will be unavailable to customers during those early morning hours, this time was selected to impact the fewest number of claimants possible.

To prevent the overload of the system that users have experienced, the Department introduced a virtual waiting line. Constituents received notification including the number of individuals ahead of them in the virtual line and an estimated wait time that was constantly updated.

Processing Times for Customer Transactions

Processing times varied depending on the customer's submission of required documents as well as the number of individuals accessing services at the same time.

Adjusting Hours to Meet Customer Demands

The Maryland Department of Labor's website allowed for constituents to have access to services 24 hours a day and seven days a week.

Licensing and Permitting from Multiple Perspectives

The Division of Occupational and Professional Licensing is the primary issuer of licenses for the Maryland Department of Labor. Overseeing 21 licensing boards, commissions and programs appointed by the Governor, the Division of Occupational and Professional Licensing is responsible for regulating the activities of more than 255,000 individuals and businesses across 25 professions.

The Number & Type of Licenses and Permits Processed for FY20

The Number & Type of Licenses and Permits Processed for FY20 are as follows:

- New licenses issued was 22,733
- Renewals of existing licenses was 112,620
- **For a total of 135,353 licenses processed (new and renewed)**
- The total number of active licenses for O&P is 263,929

Processing Times for Customer Transactions

The Division of Occupational and Professional Licensing (O&P) saw a positive improvement in processing time during FY20 as a result of staff moving to working remotely. The Division monitors performance via a survey that is sent electronically to licensees. O&P has improved their customer satisfaction rating since moving from in office to telework. The FY20 rating when the staff was in the office was 8.98. Post telework, their rating increased to 9.1.

Adjusting Hours to Meet Customer Demands

The website answered many questions for customers which allowed for access to services and information anytime, 24/7.

The Maryland Department of Labor seeks to constantly improve its customer service delivery and meet the needs of constituents. During FY20, Labor staff has demonstrated the teamwork, resiliency, and flexibility necessary to provide uninterrupted service to employers, licensees, jobseekers, unemployment insurance claimants, and many others. The Department of Labor will continue to safeguard and protect Marylanders by supporting the economic stability of the state during these unprecedented times. In addition, the Department of Labor will remain vigilant in an effort to provide businesses, the workforce and the consuming public with high quality customer-focused regulatory, employment and training services whether virtually online or, in person.

Conclusion

Under the leadership of Governor Hogan, the Department of Labor has experienced a culture shift to a more responsive and transparent organization. From the professionals we license (plumbers, electricians, engineers, HVAC professional and others) to the services we provide to help others; we touch the lives of Marylanders every day and sometimes at the most vulnerable times in their lives. We are especially proud to have been in the forefront of advancing the Governor's customer service pledge, and are firmly committed to continuing to develop that standard of excellence and the quality of service that Marylanders receive. We ARE indeed changing Maryland for the better at the Department of Labor every day.