



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Executive Department

Executive Directive Number Sixteen (2021)

Directing the Commissioner of the Virginia Employment Commission (VEC) to Further Expand Capacity of Unemployment Insurance (UI) System

Importance of the Issue

The Commonwealth of Virginia ranks 51st out of 53 states and territories regarding the amount of federal funding it receives relative to what Virginia businesses pay in taxes. Despite being underfunded, the Commonwealth's UI system successfully distributed \$12.9 billion in benefits to over 1.3 million eligible Virginians since the start of the pandemic. This is a testament to the incredible value of this system to Virginia citizens and the economy. The Commonwealth is now ranked sixth in the nation and first in the Mid-Atlantic region for the timely payment of benefits to eligible applicants.

It is evident, however, that we must do more to ensure that Virginians' unemployment benefit claims are resolved in a timely manner and that those who are eligible for benefits receive them quickly. VEC must have access to and mobilize additional staff and funding to carry out this critical role.

Directive to Further Expand Capacity of Unemployment Insurance System

By virtue of the authority vested in me as Governor by Article V of the Constitution of Virginia and under the laws of the Commonwealth, I hereby direct VEC to undertake the following measures to prioritize the adjudication of UI claims:

- A. Increase the number of adjudications being processed by VEC per week from 5,700 to 10,000 by June 30, 2021, and to 20,000 by July 31, 2021.
- B. Coordinate with the Virginia Department of Human Resource Management to identify employees across Virginia's state agencies who can temporarily serve as VEC adjudicators, program support and administrative staff, or fraud investigators.
- C. Continue to hire staff and upgrade and enhance technology to improve call wait times. This will include, if necessary, procuring an additional contract for contact center services and staff to augment the ongoing expansion.

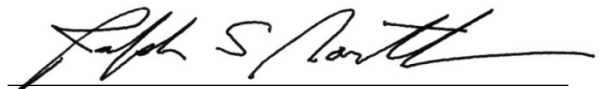
- D. Complete the UI system modernization project in order to launch the new live system by October 2021.
- E. Collaborate with Virginia’s congressional delegation, with support from the Office of the Governor, to resolve the disparity in federal funding across state unemployment systems.

Effective Date of the Executive Directive

This Executive Directive shall be effective upon its signing and shall remain in full force and effect unless amended or rescinded by further executive action.

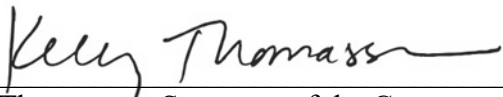
Given under my hand and under the Seal of the Commonwealth of Virginia this 18th day of May, 2021.





Ralph S. Northam, Governor

Attest:



Kelly Thomasson, Secretary of the Commonwealth