



GRETCHEN WHITMER  
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY  
LANSING

SUSAN CORBIN  
DIRECTOR

**MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** March 7, 2023

**TO:** Honorable Winnie Brinks , Senate Majority Leader  
Honorable Aric Nesbitt, Senate Minority Leader  
Honorable Joe Tate, Speaker of the House  
Honorable Matt Hall, House Minority Leader

**FROM:** Julia Dale, Director  
Michigan Unemployment Insurance Agency  
Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity

**SUBJECT:** Unemployment Insurance Advocacy Program Report 2022

Attached is the Unemployment Insurance Agency annual Advocacy Program report for 2022, pursuant to PA 226 of 1989, Section 5a of the Michigan Employment Security Act.

The unemployment agency shall make an annual report to the legislature on the operation of the advocacy program. Each report must include the following for the previous 12-month period:

- (a) Number and type of claimants served.
- (b) Number and type of employers served.
- (c) Costs to the program of the claimants served.
- (d) Costs to the program of the employers served.
- (e) An analysis of the impact of the services provided on the appeal system provided by this act.

Should you have any questions regarding this report or need additional information please contact Rachael Wineland, UIA Legislative Liaison at [WinelandR@michigan.gov](mailto:WinelandR@michigan.gov) or 517-290-3053.

cc: Members - Michigan Senate  
Members - Michigan House of Representatives

## Unemployment Insurance Advocacy Program

### 2022 Annual Report

The Advocacy Program was created by the enactment of Public Act 226 of 1989, which added Section 5a to the Michigan Employment Security Act (MES Act). The Advocacy Program's purpose is to provide information, consultation, and representation services to the unemployed workers (claimants) and employers who request assistance with an appeal to an administrative law judge. The Advocacy Program began providing services in 1991 and since then, over 260,508 customer cases have been opened and closed.

The appropriation for this program is \$1.5 million. The law requires that a maximum of 60% (\$900,000) of the appropriation be used for claimant representation and a maximum of 40% (\$600,000) of the appropriation be used for employer representation.

- A. During CY 2022, 1,354 claimant cases were provided advocacy services.
- B. During CY 2022, 840 employer cases were provided advocacy services.
- C. The program expenditures incurred to serve claimants totaled \$217,300, which is 24.14% of that allotted portion of the appropriation.
- D. The program expenditures incurred to serve employers totaled \$128,750 which is 21.46% of that allotted portion of the appropriation.
- E. The total number of advocacy cases decreased from 2021 to 2022 due to Covid 19 pandemic quarantine restrictions being lifted. The decrease in the number of unemployment claims filed was the result of employees being allowed to return to work. The number of claimant cases receiving services from the Advocacy Program during 2022 decreased by approximately 23.09% from the previous year, as did the number of employer cases receiving services with a reduction of approximately 25.4% from the previous year. It is expected that claimants and employers will continue to use the Advocacy Program as they will continue to need advocacy services for assistance with representation at their hearings.

The advocates provide eligible customers with a consultation and representation. During a consultation, the advocate is required to discuss the issue(s) involved, review documentation, and help the customer determine if witnesses are necessary for the

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hearing. The advocate also explains the hearing process and what to expect during the hearing. As a result, the parties are better prepared to present their case.

The Advocacy Program does not provide representation services at the hearing if the advocate determines the case lacks merit. The Advocate determines if the appeal has merit based on a reasonable application of the MES Act and precedent case law. If after consulting with the customer, the advocate determines that the case lacks merit, the advocate must advise their customer accordingly. At times, claimants and employers decide to withdraw their appeal after consulting with an advocate. This helps to reduce the number of hearings before the administrative law judges.

The Advocacy Program is planning to launch a recruitment campaign to increase the number of advocates in the upcoming months. The campaign will include contacts with educational institutions, law firms, advocacy organizations and media outlets. One of the ways UIA has worked to increase visibility about the program was to develop a [helpful video](#) to promote the Advocacy Program. The video enhances the knowledge of UIA staff and informs the public about the benefits of the Advocacy Program. The video is also available on social media platforms and for more details you can visit the [program's webpage](#). Interested individuals can also contact the Advocacy Program by calling 800-638-3994.

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