PX 143

Employment Development Department Strike Team Detailed Assessment and Recommendations

Prepared by EDD Strike Team Co-Chairs

Secretary Yolanda Richardson, Government Operations Agency

and

Jennifer Pahlka, founder of Code for America and former US Deputy Chief Technology Officer

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EXHIBIT

PENGAD 800-631-6989

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refined it over the course of the final week of the Strike Team's engagement, and the result is a plan to address each and every claim in the backlog with the maximum possible speed and efficiency. In this analysis, older claims will begin to be addressed immediately, and with relief coming to many claimants as soon as a few weeks from now, and the final remnants of the backlog resolved within four months. The plan reflects incredibly disciplined, thorough, and thoughtful work on the part of the EDD team and is by far our best chance of getting claimants the relief they need.

Moreover, EDD's comprehensive, data-driven approach to this plan should be commended, along with the leaders within the department who championed it. It should inspire confidence from all stakeholders, as it is emblematic of an approach that, if applied consistently to future challenges, will mean a dramatically different and better future for the department.

Recommendations:

- Adopt the "burndown" plan EDD has proposed (which models where staffing is needed) and support the associated staffing changes.
- Do not allow new hires to work overtime hours for the first three months, since those hours only create additional work for experienced employees.
- Allow all redirected employees to return to their original desks to the greatest degree possible.. We found multiple employees who had been temporarily reassigned to different floors/areas, which disrupts their ability to collaborate with their original teams.
- (As above) BCIS should build the functionality to allow employees to return work items, without requiring a supervisor to move them, and without requiring that the work item be reassigned to another employee.

The call centers are overwhelmed

EDD has two call centers: one is open from 8am-12pm, and is staffed by experienced Employment Programs Representatives, (EPRs) with the ability to make changes to claims. This is called "call center 1.0" in some documents. A second call center, variously named "Technical Assistance Line" or "call center 1.5," is open from 8am-8pm, and is staffed by hundreds of new employees for the purposes of handling lower-level requests.

Call Center 1.0 (8a-12p)

The phone number 1-800-300-5616, now called "call center 1.0," was not intentionally established as a call center; it was a convenience number connected to the desk phones at a particular Northern California field office. This phone number can't be routed anywhere outside of the in-office desk phone system, so as employees began telework and/or were reassigned to other priorities (e.g. Work Share), they stopped answering the phones.

This line received on average 6.7 million calls per week during the month of July, representing approximately 600,000 unique callers. The outbound call message also refers callers to the call center 1.5, which is discussed below.

There is confusion among employees and management about this call center. When we visited the office where it is housed, and asked where the call center was, an employee speculated that perhaps it had moved to southern California, but that was determined to be inaccurate. A manager explained that because most of the staff is now working from home, and those that still come in have been redirected to other priorities, this office no longer answers a high volume of calls. This redirection is corroborated by the workforce-monitoring tools that EPMs use, including CCPulse and VCC.

Prior to the pandemic, in February, the enterprise-wide average for this call center was that one employee could handle 5 calls per hour. (EDD's current public estimates are that agents can only handle 4 calls per hour.) EDD would need 6,000 agents working from 8-12, without competing priorities, to serve 600,000 unique callers at 5 calls per hour. Observing the supervisor dashboard "CCPulse," we found no more than 20 employees answering calls at a time, and the number of empty cubicles we saw would support that number. We can safely estimate that no more than 1 in 1000 people that are trying to reach this call center on a given day are getting through. The morning our team visited this office, we observed four live phone calls in 90 minutes. Of those, two were determined by staff to be from claimants attempting fraud, and they were not helped. On each of the calls, much time was absorbed hearing the claimant explain the number of hours they have been on hold, and the number of days they have been trying to call, highlighting how challenging it can be to serve claimants efficiently under current circumstances.

In summary, in "call center 1.0":

- Capacity is down more than 80% from the pre-pandemic level.
- Demand (incoming call volume) is up over 1000% from the pre-pandemic level.
- Some callers are not being helped because of fear of fraud.
- Callers who don't get through are referred via the outgoing message to the call center 1.5, which we discuss below. Because that call center can't help them with claims, many callers then return to trying to get through to call center 1.0.

The net effect is that 600,000 unique callers a month are waiting on hold for hours without a statistically significant chance of being served, just in call center 1.0.

Call center 1.5 (8a-8p)

The Technical Assistance Line, also known as call center 1.5, will eventually have two levels: "Level 1" password reset requests and "Level 2" higher-level requests handled by journey-level claims representatives. Currently, however, it only has "Level 1" employees. Newly hired claims processors are assigned to this call center, but as new hires, they are not able to move claims forward and are effectively at the same level as the call center agent. The platform for call center 2.0 is the Verizon product "Virtual Contact Center," or VCC.

In July 2020, the EDD received an average of 3.5 million calls per week through the Technical Assistance Line, representing on average 412,000 unique callers. Many of these are referred from call center 1.0's outbound message. As of August 4th , EDD has 1,561 agents on the technical assistance line.

This is EDD's hiring plan for the call center:

Call Center Staffing

	New hires	Redirected staff	Deloitte surge staff	Total staff
By end of July	461	500	500	1,461
By end of August	1,250	500	500	2,250
By end of September	1,904	500 (begin return to normal duties)	500	2,404 – 2,904
By end of October	3,000	500 (transition to normal duties)	500	3,500 – 4,000