AUDITOR GENERAL'S COMMENTS ON THE DEPARTMENT'S RESPONSE

The Joint Legislative Audit Committee requires all agencies to respond to whether they agree with our findings and plan to implement the recommendations. We appreciate the Department's response, including its agreement with all findings and its willingness to work collaboratively with our Office to continue to improve its provision of UI Program customer service and access to the UI Program. However, the Department has included certain statements in its response that necessitate the following clarification.

Issue

Department's response

In its responses to Findings 1 and 2, the Department stated that the audit period was nearly 18 months prior to our report's publication and that most of our recommendations were related to continuing and/or supplementing the Department's existing efforts, actions, and processes.

Auditor General's comments

The time frame for our audit spanned calendar years 2023 through early 2025. Our initial focus on the Department's provision of customer service in calendar year 2023 was based on several factors, including our risk assessment, stakeholder feedback indicating that members of the public had experienced multiple issues with the Department's UI Program customer service during that time frame, and the goal of providing the Department with useful information to inform its ongoing UI program modernization efforts.

Our audit also included a significant amount of work to assess the Department's provision of UI Program customer service during calendar year 2024 and early 2025, and this work was particularly important for assessing the impact of various changes the Department made or reported it made during the audit (see pages 32, 37 through 42, 46 through 48, 50, and 51). Although this work identified that the Department had improved its provision of UI Program customer service in several areas (see pages 32, 37 through 41, and 48), we also identified additional customer service issues and potential barriers for accessing the UI Program, and we made several recommendations to address these issues (see pages 32 through 33, 38, 41 through 42, and 48 through 52 for the issues we identified; and pages 43 and 44, recommendations 1 through 4, 10, and 11, and page 55, recommendations 14 through 20 for the associated recommendations we made).

Finally, although some of our work did assess Department processes and efforts that were already in place at the beginning of our audit, most of our recommendations that direct the Department to continue its efforts are related to actions it took during the audit, and in many cases, these actions were in response to our work (see pages 32, 38, 41, 48, and 52). We appreciate the Department's responsiveness during the audit to start addressing these issues, and we look forward to continuing to work with the Department to address all outstanding issues during our followup process.

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