



Meeting the Needs of UI Claimants in “The Great Recession”

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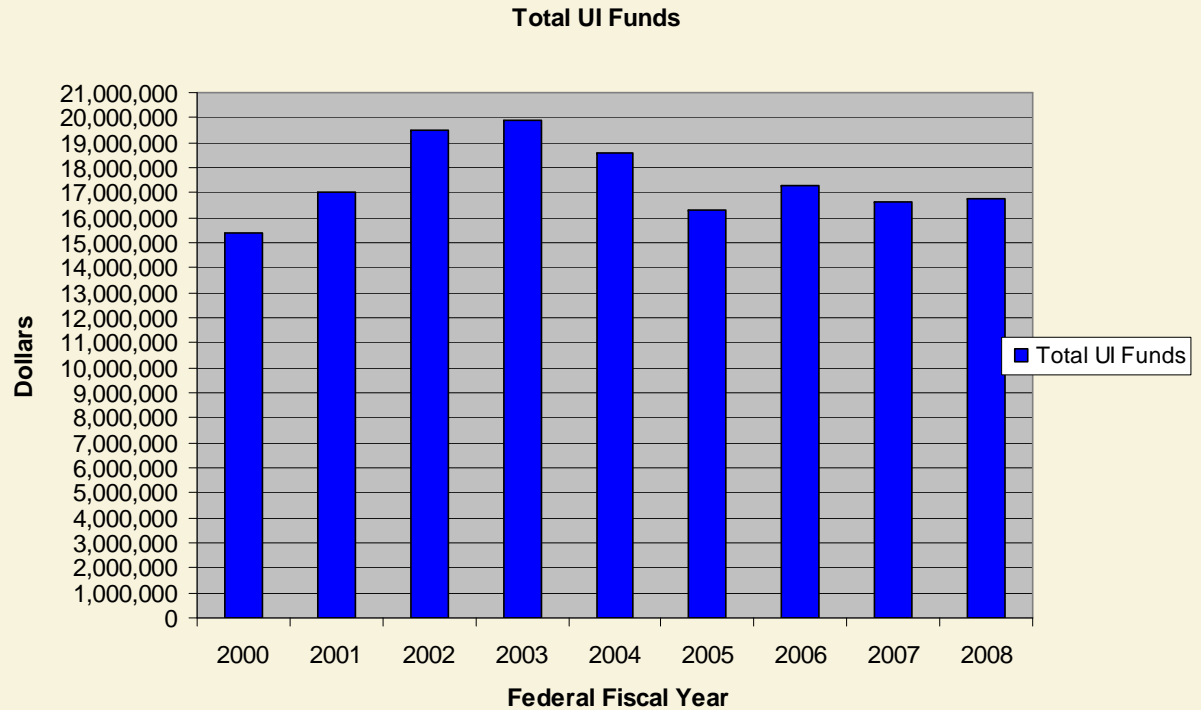


A Little Background

- The “New” Unemployment Office
 - Move to call center environment
- Technology Challenges
 - The Story of Earl: How I learned to hate the main frame
 - The UIM Movement
- Funding



Funding Background



Had funding kept pace with inflation, the 2008 number would have been \$19,481,875.



Then All Hell Broke Loose

- Current Recession
- Four extended benefit programs
 - EUC I, II, III
 - State EB
- Claim volumes through the roof
 - November 2008: 16,683 initial claims; 89,823 continued claims
 - July 2009: 28,988 initial claims; 213,286 continued claims
- Call volumes skyrocketed
 - November 2008, handling 4,000 calls a week
 - July 2009, handling more than 12,000 calls a week



The Challenges

- System Challenges
 - Operating system in Kansas (like most states)
 - OLD (some parts of program 40 years old)
 - Inflexible
 - COBOL language – one million lines of code
 - An octopus in a box
- Staffing Challenges
 - Ramping up our call center
 - Training obstacles
 - More resources for IT



The Response

- Continued UIM
 - New approach, revised priorities
 - Implementations to assist with workload
- Hiring
 - Pulled from existing staff; mandatory overtime
 - Experimented with training models
 - Experimented with call center hours
- Reorganization of the Call Center
 - New management structure, new management
 - Skills-based routing
- Push to online services
 - Improved online application
 - Dedicated work stations, customer service assistants in workforce centers
 - Marketing campaign



Where Are We Now

- **Some Improvement in the Contact Center**
 - Handling between 10,000 and 12,000 calls each week
 - Average wait time around 12 minutes
- **Still Looking for Customer Service Improvements**
 - Developing e-mail newsletter for claimants
 - Considering pro-active communication with claimants
 - Considering more dedicated staff in workforce centers
 - Exploring opportunities to partner with public libraries
 - Considering new call routing configurations





Thank You

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