

Nomination for 2021 NASCIO State IT Recognition Award

**New York State
Office of Information Technology Services
Business Process Innovation
Robotic Process Automation – Unemployment
Insurance Pandemic Response Efforts
March 2020 – March 2021
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What problem or opportunity does the project address?

COVID-19 brought severe economic crisis nationwide. The Federal government provided economic relief for unemployed New Yorkers. NYS Department of Labor (DOL) was mandated to disburse Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) and process an unprecedented volume of Unemployment Insurance (UI) claims. The existing legacy application and manual processes used by DOL were not designed to scale to address surging demand for benefits.

Starting in March 2020 and continuing for the next 12 months NYS ITS took the following steps to automate DOL's UI Processes:

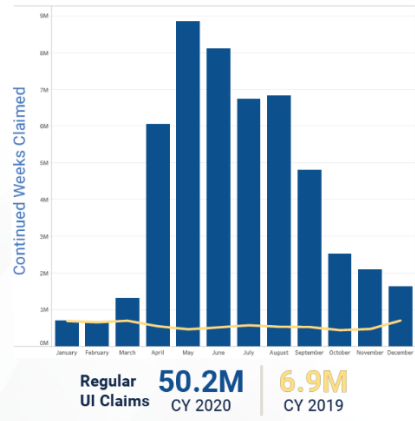
1. Short term roadmap was to process around 2 million PUA and UI claims registered as part of COVID 19 crisis and to increase in speed, accuracy of claim processing going forward to distribute money for New Yorkers in need on time.
2. Mr. Rajiv Rao, New York State Chief Technology Officer and the ITS team in partnership with DOL, led the way in implementing the Robotic process automation platform within 2 weeks. This consisted of a platform with 300 unattended BOTS operating around the clock (7x24).
3. An extensive assessment of existing processes was conducted along with DOL UI business analysts to address and prioritize high value processes that were impacting NY resident UI payments.
4. The ITS team worked tirelessly to program, test and run each process that replaced manual human keystrokes with robotic process automation. This increased accuracy, speed and around the clock (7x24) processing.
5. Prevent fraudulent applications by verifying individual identities using third party identity verification integration. Enabled scalability, speed, and accuracy by integrating with other technology partners, such as, Google, Verizon, and DocuSign.

Why does it matter?

DOL needed to get real money out the door to New Yorkers who were truly in need, some of whom were out of a job for the first time in their lives and worried by the prospect of not being able to provide for their families. Though DOL worked around the clock with existing employees and legacy infrastructure, they were not able to immediately meet the UI claims demand surge.

REGULAR UI CLAIMS PROCESSED

CY 2020



Robotic process automation solutions processed the unemployment claims 30 times faster than usual i.e., DOL paid out just \$2.1 billion in all of 2019 – meaning the value of benefits distributed during the pandemic represents what would otherwise represent the value of 30 years of benefits paid out given typical demand. RPA prevented immediate payments to 2.3 million potential fraudulent claims.

RPA improved the process to release almost 13 million individual weeks of benefits from the legacy mainframe system before the end of May 2020 and an additional almost 16 million weeks of benefits in June. In the past 12 months, DOL has processed more than 6.1M back week certifications using this new electronic process.

BENEFITS PAID	CY 2020	CY 2019
Regular UI Claims <i>Total benefits paid</i>	\$14.3B	\$2.1B
Pandemic Unemployment Assistance	\$9.3B	\$0
Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation	\$28.3B	\$0
Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation	\$3.1B	\$0
State Extended Benefits	\$452.9M	\$0
Sub Total	\$55.5B	\$0
Lost Wage Assistance	\$4.1B	\$0
All Claims <i>Total Benefits Paid</i>	\$59.6B	\$2.1B

What makes it different?

Robotic process automation is a technology that mimics the human actions performed on a computer without human intervention. Before implementing RPA, DOL users manually keyed in claim details into legacy applications, like Mainframe. Also, due to increase in volumes new data operators had to be hired and trained. RPA improved processing time and eased the human capital burden.

Implementing the RPA solution enabled DOL to process 95% of PUA claims on the same day allowing New Yorkers to receive the unemployment benefits quickly.

What makes it universal?

Robotic process automation is a highly valuable initiative that can be evolved across all departments where there is need to reduce redundant manual work and create opportunities for the business to address other priorities. This technology can be implemented in any type of environment in a short span of time. ITS is continuing to expand the use of RPA to other lines of business at the DOL and assessing opportunities to extend the technology to other agencies. RPA has also allowed DOL to retain knowledge of legacy processes that would otherwise be lost with staff attrition.